



# THE MIRACULOUS DAY

*by*

H. L. GEE



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TO  
MY MOTHER



## PREFACE

WHENEVER I visit Kew Gardens I am overwhelmed with gratitude. To think I who have not planted one seed, nor pruned one tree, should be privileged to share in all its beauty!

I feel this same gratitude when walking in a quiet suburb; I am free to stop and gaze at other people's gardens, whose fragrance and riot of colour is mine to enjoy.

So do I feel when I come across a book wherein are many fragrant, refreshing thoughts. I thank the author for permitting me to wander through a garden planned, planted, pruned, and perfected by his mind.

I spent an entire evening strolling happily up and down the garden paths of Mr. H. L. Gee's manuscript called *The Cheerful Day*.

Flowers of many colours and of varying size are blossoming here, all rooted in the soil of Hope and Courage. By the time I had reached the last page my spirit was again filled with deep gratitude that I and others are able to share in the beauty of a garden Mr. Gee has planted so discriminatingly and with such artistic success.

WILHELMINA STITCH



I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith  
to be content.

St. PAUL.



## FOREWORD

A BOOK of good cheer will be worth most to those who need it most.

If you are sometimes depressed because there is apparent confusion and misunderstanding everywhere, or if you could easily grow bitter because men and women seem unlovable, perhaps you will find something here to help you to keep your faith and to make living a little more attractive. If you are perplexed and troubled and anxious about many things; if there are times when you go to bed to think in the darkness; if a little of the joy you once had has drained from your face and something of the old lightness gone from your step, it may be that you will find a page here that may be the beginning of a new courage and confidence.

There is nothing ambitious about this book. It is all very simple. If you wish, you may regard it as a sort of medicine-chest, a pocket first-aid. Among its stores are balms for hurt minds; oil for deep wounds; tonics for depression; and possibly a few spiritual vitamins for the rebuilding of character and faith.

The key-word of this book is, *Be of good cheer*. It is a lovely and an inspiring word, and it comes to us with all the richness it has gathered in the years since Jesus said it. He said it in a dark hour, an hour when everything that could be wrong was as wrong as it could be.

There is still much that is not right to-day. No

explanation is attempted here of how or why there is wrongness or suffering or injustice or fear or misfortune. No remedies for putting the world to rights are advanced. Here is nothing for the philosopher who calmly observes life as if it were an academic problem from which he is quite detached. These pages are for men and women busy with the hourly problem of living, and finding it anything but easy.

Because I talk of *The Cheerful Day* do not think this book the work of a shallow optimist who has deliberately closed his eyes to the worst and written cheaply of the best. I do not pretend that there is nothing to be deplored; but through these pages I have tried to remind myself that there are some good things, at any rate a few gracious men and women, riches to balance our poverty, good to set by the ill, wonderful compensations, blessings to thank God for.

As long as the world is not altogether ugly and life not wholly bad, so long shall we be able to say to each other, *Be of good cheer.*

Believing, then, that though there is much to condemn there is also much to make us glad and thankful, and having been long acquainted with grief, I come to you who have plodded thus far along what has sometimes been a hard road, and I say, *Friend, I cannot take the burden from your shoulders—would to God that I could. I cannot make the road less rough or the hill less steep. But see, there is a year's travelling ahead. I will go with you, if you will have me; and together we will talk of whatsoever things are lovely that perhaps a little good cheer may drop into our hearts.*

H. L. GEE

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## THE CHEERFUL DAY



THINGS MIGHT BE WORSE  
*January 1*

I OVERTOOK him on the way to the station to catch the business-men's train. 'Anything wrong?' I asked, glancing at his face.

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Everything,' he said moodily.

I told him I was sorry, adding, 'After what you said the other day I was hoping business was good.'

'It isn't the business,' he replied.

I let my hand rest lightly on his arm. 'Cheer up, old man,' I said. 'She may come back.'

'Come back?' he repeated. 'Who?'

'Your wife.' There was (I think) a note of genuine compassion in my voice. I saw his astonishment. 'Then it's June?' I asked. 'Little June? She's ill?'

'What *are* you driving at?' he demanded. 'Who said she was ill?' He was almost angry.

'No one,' I confessed. 'No one. I'm glad it isn't June. But I'm sorry about the house. It was insured against fire, I presume?'

He stared at me in amazement.

'Not burned to the ground?' I asked hopefully.

He had to smile in spite of himself. Perhaps the twinkle in my eye betrayed me.

'Ah, well,' he said with something like good humour. 'Things are not as good as they might be. But you're right, *they might be worse.*'

## BRAVE MEN

*January 2*

JESUS: Let not your heart be troubled.

SAMUEL: Be of good courage and play the man.

SHAKESPEARE: Take arms against a sea of troubles.

And by opposing, end them.

BROWNING (*writing his farewell*):

One who never turned his back, but marched  
breast forward.

Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed, though right were worsted,  
wrong would triumph;

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

SOCRATES (*shortly before his death*):

Wherefore, O judges, know this, that to a good  
man no evil thing can happen.

ST. PAUL: Watch; stand fast in the faith; quit  
you like men; be strong.

## THE OTHER FELLOW

*January 3*

ALWAYS believe the best about the other fellow—  
until you know the worst. And when you know the  
worst be sure you do *know* it. Make certain you are  
not imagining it, or putting implicit faith in an  
idle rumour. It may be his misfortune to be mis-  
understood. Be cautious. Be charitable. Look for  
the best in him.

And if he turns out a thoroughly bad lot, give him  
your hand and try to make him better!

## THE DEPUTY

*January 4*

'I SEE you've had your barrow newly painted,' I said to the out-porter at the station.

'Yes,' said he. 'Only it isn't mine; it's Bill's.'

'Indeed? Then why paint it?'

'Oh, well, it needed it—and I am a coach-painter when there's any coaches to paint. I just touched it up a bit.'

'And what are you doing with Bill's handcart?'

'Bill's in hospital, you see, and I'm out of work, you see, so I'm just sort of passing the time pushing this here thing about.'

'And Bill doesn't mind?'

'No fear. Would you mind somebody making money for you?'

'Money? Oh, I see—you give him the money?'

'Not likely! He don't need it in hospital, but his wife finds it pretty handy, and so the merry-go-round goes round!'

Did you ever realize there were people like this?

## A PRAYER FROM THOMAS FULLER

*January 5*

LORD, before I commit a sin it seems to me so shallow that I wade through it dry-shod from any guiltiness; but when I have committed it, it often seems so deep that I cannot escape without drowning. Lend me, O Lord, a reed out of thy sanctuary, truly to measure the dimension of my offences.

## LOOKING AT LIFE

*January 6*

ONE thing we can always try to do is to see the best in the worst.

Two men look through the same bars:  
One sees mud, one the stars.

It sounds trite and commonplace. But it is profoundly true, and it sums up half the philosophy of life.

'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' said Jesus to His disciples in the darkest hour of His life, *but be of good cheer.*

There you have a gospel. Jesus did not flinch from the hard facts of life, the indisputable facts of sorrow and of suffering. He did not say adversity should be taken from us. But He taught us to look through the sorrow and beyond the suffering, to see the best as well as the worst.

## YOU CAN ✓

*January 7*

A MAN *can* do more than he can.

It is not so ridiculous as it seems.

You know it. You know that when you think you cannot go another step, you somehow get strength to plod on. You know that when you are out of patience—there is still a little left. If only you will stir yourself, try again, be brave, you *can* do more than you can.

Love splendidly, and you will do a thousand times more than you could otherwise have done.

## GIVING AND RECEIVING

*January 8*

GREAT was the excitement in the city for the Rajah was to pass through. The beggar, with his wooden bowl, pushed his way to the front of the crowd, and as the prince came by he cried, 'See my bowl, my bowl, give me something!' The Rajah turned aside and said, 'Give *me* something!'

Thinking that he had not been rightly understood the beggar cried again, 'See my bowl,' but again the Rajah asked for something. Then, angry and disappointed, the beggar thrust a grain of rice into the extended hand, and looking in his bowl, says the Indian legend, he found a piece of gold the size of a grain of rice. 'Ah, fool that I am!' he cried. 'Why did I not give him all?'

And so it is with life. Who gives most receives most—and sometimes more than he could ask or think!

## THE QUEST

*January 9*

HAVE there never been times when you have felt that life was a mockery?

Remember the poorest man is he who has everything! By its very nature life is a quest, and the Splendid Adventurer is he who seeks diligently and with faith and cheerfulness. Once we have achieved our ideal, we die.

Heaven is always at the other side of the hill!

## WISDOM FROM GREECE

*January 10* ✓

A MAN should endeavour not merely to appear good, but to be good.

Endure patiently your present sufferings.

Know thyself.

Be slow to undertake a thing, but once undertaken, go through with it.

While there is life there is hope.

Always remember a benefit received, forget a benefit given.

A thing worth having is never obtained without hard work.

Time heals every grief.

## SPLENDID PRISONERS

*January 11*

PAUL (*an ambassador in chains*): Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain.

EPICTETUS (*in prison*): It is difficulties which show the men we are.

JOHN BUNYAN (*in Bedford Gaol*): I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down to sleep, and as I slept I dreamed a dream.

*An innocent YORKSHIREMAN (dying in prison)*: I forgive all my enemies.

SIR THOMAS MORE's *last letter*: Pray for me that we may merrily meet in heaven.

SOCRATES: From virtue comes every good of man. This is my teaching.

## YOUTH

*January 12*

It was a pleasant party. The ladies looked charming (and knew it) and the men were very gallant and pretended they did not work for their living (and were probably being honest for once), and with whist and dancing we were all enjoying ourselves superbly (more or less), and at 11.50 p.m. a young man took me behind a palm and said, 'You know, I'm awfully thrilled with life. Isn't it wonderful that you find fossils in the rocks—and all these millions of years, you know, and the theory of Relativity, and all that sort of thing, and the universe being so big. It gets me, somehow. I should like to write a poem about it. I feel . . .'

'Oh, so you're there, Herbert!' said a sweet young thing laughing at us.

Yes we were there—behind the palm. But were we? Or were we beyond the Milky Way, high on the eternal wings of youth, so high that at midnight we could see the glory of the dawn?

## JOHN WESLEY'S RULE

*January 13*

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

## THE WAY AND THE PROMISE

*January 14*

AND Jesus said, Little children, yet a little while I am with you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also. Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

## GHOSTS ~

*January 15*

TROUBLES that never materialize are like ghosts. With a real trouble you know where you are. Either it crushes you and finishes you, or you stand up to it and have a tussle, and come out conqueror in the end—and usually all the better and stronger for the fight.

But imaginary troubles are illusive, haunting. You cannot grapple with them. The only thing to do with them is to do what sensible people do with ghosts—disbelieve in them. Run away from a ghost, try to fight it, or exorcize it, and it laughs in triumph over you. Disbelieve it, and the wretched thing dies of a broken heart.

## PAIN

*January 16*

GREAT Sieve, into whose mesh is cast  
The unsorted rubble of the soul,  
That all the drops may filter past  
And leave behind (to pay the toll  
Of days unloved and nights unslept,  
The unfair bitterness of fear,  
With hopes untrue and faith unkept),  
That fraction which the Lord holds dear!

I thank my God that I have seen  
So much fine gold laid bare by Thee;  
For often, Pain, Thy touch hath been  
The key unlocking privily  
Full many a dark, forbidding door,  
With rusty lock and lichened frieze,  
To show a sun-bathed garden, more  
A beauty than Hesperides.

## MINUTES AND YEARS

*January 17*

Look at an oak with its 500 years of grandeur, and then listen carefully. Can you hear it growing? In silence it becomes strong.

Chatter to a friend; lecture a student; preach to a sinner; spread gossip in a whisper (if you must); shout your wares in the street; and have you done as much as a *silent* handgrip and an understanding nod for a friend in trouble?

We often speak most effectively by our silence.

## GOOD ST. THOMAS

*January 18*

'BUILD me a magnificent palace,' said Gondoforus, King of the Indies, speaking to St. Thomas. 'Here is gold and silver, build in my absence.'

When the King returned he found that Thomas had given all the money to the sick and poor. He ordered him to be tortured to death; but the night before the execution the King's brother dreamed he had gone to Paradise, where he saw a magnificent palace, the angels saying, 'Behold the palace of King Gondoforus!'

Then the King ran to the dungeon and set St. Thomas free, for an eternal palace had been built.

## THE MAN I MEANT TO BE

*January 19*

ONE of the things I treasure most is a schoolboy diary, much thumbed and worn, and written in here and there in a very clumsy hand. It was mine years ago, and I keep it for one entry.

It says, 'Lord, make me a good man, and help me to live for other people only.'

You may think the boy who wrote that was a little prig. You may think he was precocious. I do not care what you think, I know that I had an idealism then that I have lost. I know I am not the man I meant to be.

God help us all to look back sometimes to the old idealisms, that even though we cannot recapture them, they may inspire us to something nobler than the sort of day we are satisfied with now.

## TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*January 20*

DEAR HOUSEWIFE,

There are days when everything in the home goes wrong. You are late getting the wash on the way; when the sheets are out the sun goes in; the housemaid is little use because a bilious 'turn' comes over her; and when at last the sun comes out again the clothes-line breaks, and with it your patience. You could sit down and cry with vexation and disappointment.

Dear, brave woman, it *is* hard, but you have to-morrow.

Battles are won not only on distant fields, but in sculleries, too.

## HOW THEY TRIUMPHED

*January 21*

ST. PAUL, by faith.

LATIMER and RIDLEY, by lighting a candle that (please God) should never be put out.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, by refusing to fail.

WILBERFORCE, by patience and ceaseless struggle.

COLUMBUS, by determination and faith.

ST. FRANCIS, by humility.

ROBERT BRUCE, by trying.

MARTHA, by washing dishes.

MARY, by contemplation.

TURNER, by vision.

JESUS, by sacrifice.

## TWO WAYS

*January 22*

WHENEVER the little chap came down the stairs he forsook the carpet for the white enamel at the sides, kicking it, scratching it, spoiling it.

'Keep off the enamel, can't you?' said his father. 'How many more times do you need telling? Keep off, do you hear?'

He heard—and the next time he came down the stairs he was on the enamel again.

Then said his mother, 'Look at the steep hill with two white waterfalls coming down. How dangerous it is! Only a clever *man* could climb up or down without getting wet!'

Then the little chap went up and down on the carpet—the white enamel was saved.

Don't say, 'Don't.' Say, 'Do.'

## THE OTHERS ✓

*January 23*

BE of good cheer, if not for your own sake, for the sake of others. However great your misfortune, and however hard the thing you have to bear, others have to live with you or work with you, and as far as in you lies you must make living bearable for them.

Sometimes sorrow makes us selfish and sometime misfortune drives us into ourselves.

But the glory of both is that through them we can win a genius for understanding and sympathy.

## HEROES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

*January 24*

IF you are one of the unemployed, and want work, God be with you. God be in your head and understanding, and in your idle hands. You have a secret sense of being unwanted; a sort of undeserved shame in your uselessness. Do not grow rebellious. Be patient still. Be generous in your thoughts. Hope still. God knows there is nothing we need more than heroes of unemployment, men and women determined to keep level-headed till better times come.

## THE BRAVE MAN

*January 25*

HE is the man who looks for work day after day and comes home disappointed yet not disheartened, sad yet not bitter, very near to hopelessness yet still daring to believe that the world will need his hand or brain.

Checking what could easily be resentment and anger, he is the decent citizen who bears with patience what seems injustice; who hides his anguish and has a smile for his wife and good humour for his children; who knows the state is making a drone of him, but remains loyal to the best things in the worst times, that at the last—when work is to hand—he may take it without loss of pride, his spirit big enough to forget the useless days.

## LIFE'S BANKING ACCOUNT

*January 26*

THE simpleton walked into the bank and said, 'Will you give me fifty pounds, please?'

'You haven't any money in,' the clerk protested.

'I know,' was the bland reply, 'but other people have!'

We may laugh at the simpleton, but we cannot excuse wiser men and women who try to get more out of life than they put in, imagining they can receive great good for small labour, lasting happiness in return for little trouble.

Those who travel farthest see most; those who strive for the sheer joy of doing their best are rewarded most richly. They put into life all they have and are, and, as it were, receive themselves back at compound interest.

## DEBIT AND CREDIT IN LIFE

*January 27*

AN attack of indigestion may distort your view of life, rob you of your cheerfulness, and make you for the time a self-pitying pessimist!

In these occasional 'deep depressions' it is a good plan to take paper and pencil and to make two lists—one of the trials, troubles, difficulties, disappointments, and misfortunes you have experienced; the other of all the good things that are yours. Make the first list as honestly (and as long) as you can, but do not rest until the second is longer than the first.

## THE GLORY OF IT

*January 28*

SORROW endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

*It is true.*

But we must have a care as to what we mean and what we expect by this promise of joy. It may not be merriment. It may not be laughter. It may be an ability to take the broken bits of the old life and fit them together again to make a new one. At any rate, the shapelessness of it all will take shape, the hopelessness of it all give place to a new and deeper faith, and the restlessness of spirit will sink down to a stability that is in itself the beginning of serenity.

When I look round at men and women I wonder, not that there is so much misfortune, but that so few are destroyed by it.

## THE CLOUDS YE SO MUCH DREAD

*January 29*

WILLIAM COWPER was severely tried; yet he could sing:

God moves in a mysterious way

His wonders to perform;

He plants His footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head.

## REMEMBER

*January 30*

THIS day in 1649 Charles Stuart bowed his head,  
His last word was, *Remember*. Let us remember:

That our liberties were dearly bought.

That it is no use being a hero on the battlefield,  
and an old bear at home.

That chivalry and courtesy cost nothing.

That we are what we are by the grace of God.

That we may need a bit of kindness ourselves  
some day.

That man's reach should be beyond his grasp.

That it is harder for some men to go straight than  
for others.

That it's a long lane without a turning.

That not one of us is perfect.

That where our treasure is, there will our heart  
be also.

That we are weak and God is strong.

## FORGET

*January 31*

THAT you helped Simpson over a stile.

That you are more important than Jones.

That Robinson injured you two years ago.

That it rained last Tuesday.

That to-day has been full of annoyances.

That to-morrow you must get your own back.

Forget harsh memories that embitter.

Forget—forgive.

## UNSEEN POWER

*February 1*

It may be cheerless out of doors to-day. But before this month is out miracles will happen. Unseen by you, there shall be a stirring in woods and fields, on hills and moors. A close observer will find pollen on the trees, new shoots under the hedge, birds building, buds opening. Power will energize the outdoor world, and from it shall come the first fresh miracle of Spring.

Come, let a new spirit move unseen within you, that out of your depression may blossom a firmer faith, and a courage that shall be a help to those about you. They shall know that the winter of your discontent is almost past, and shall feel the radiance of your new-born spirit.

## THE TIME TO TRY

*February 2*

THE time to try is a trying time.

Some of us forget how greatly we influence those about us. A gloomy countenance, a dismal outlook, a depressing note in our voice are all infectious. Bad weather is not made good by grumbling about it.

But it is the optimist's opportunity. It gives him a chance to show a smiling face, to keep a cheerful spirit, to do a bit of practical evangelism by going about with sunshine in his face.

February can be a trying time, but try. Good spirits are wanted now.

## A MORAL TONIC

*February 3*

FROM Sir John Lubbock:

Some people are always grumbling; if they had been born in the Garden of Eden, they would have found much to complain of. Others are happy anywhere; they see beauties and blessings all around them.

Cheerfulness is a great moral tonic. As sunshine brings out the flowers and ripens the fruit, so does cheerfulness develop in us all the seeds of good.

## OUR HEARTS UNFEIGNEDLY THANKFUL

*February 4*

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men.

We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days.

## SINGING

*February 5*

SOME people are happy when they sing. Most people are sad when I sing. Yet Harry Lauder is right, singing *is* the thing to keep you cheery. It certainly helps you on the road when you have a heavy load. If you can sing, sing when you can. It will help you, and it may help some one else—as did Pippa's song.

## GOOD IS ALWAYS HERE

*February 6*

SINCE the first page of this book was written:

It has been decided to pull down a Warwick prison and make a garden village.

Tubby Clayton (the founder of Toc H) has appealed for volunteers to work among lepers in West Africa—and fifty young men have responded.

A Stirling man has suggested an annual Thanksgiving Day for what has been achieved by the Simpsons, Marconis, Shaftesburys, Stephensons, and Elizabeth Frys of our race.

The League of Nations has persuaded Brazil to admit ten thousand Assyrians who wish to leave Irak.

The Wireless Fund for the Blind has had one thousand pounds sent anonymously.

Two Cornish folk have completed half a century of happy married life.

Professor Gilbert Murray has said: My favourite hero is a man of eighty who was killed while sliding down the banister.

## IF I FALL

*February 7*

If I fall  
I hinder all;  
If I rise  
To the skies

I shall help to drag the load  
One step farther on the road,  
On the common road we climb,  
Dead and living for all time.

## HARRY

*February 8*

I SAT behind her in the bus this evening.

She was sitting by another woman, a neighbour, I think. They were talking very loudly, but presently a silence fell between them, and the unshapely woman sat with her hands folded, staring straight before her.

'Well, Lizzy,' said her friend suddenly, 'you've gone rare and quiet. What's the matter?'

She turned slightly, and I saw a new look on her plain face. 'Silly of me,' she said in a low voice. 'I was just looking at that there advertisement about collars, and I thought poor Harry went to that there shop to buy his last collar only the day before he was knocked down. . . . He was always particular was Harry . . . and I sort of felt maybe I hadn't been all he would have liked me to be since he went. . . .'

God bless her.

## COMFORT YE

February 9

RINGING down the centuries comes this stirring message for all who are in trouble:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary.

He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail.

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

## WALKING AND NOT FAINTING

February 10

DID you notice the last four lines of yesterday's quotation? I used to think Isaiah had made a mistake, and that it was bad literary workmanship to come from mounting with wings as eagles to running and not being weary, and even to merely *walking without fainting*.

But life has taught me that this last verse is masterly. It ends, not on a minor note, but with a trumpet sound. After all, the test of life is not how we come through our shining moments, or quick conflicts, but with what graciousness and courage we plod on with the common tasks of ordinary days.

## SECOND FIDDLE

February 11

IN Yorkshire they say, 'He must be the first horse or he won't pull.'

I was once at a party where one of the guests told one funny story after another, making everyone laugh. I came away with a born humorist—one who could tell funny stories much better than the other guest. 'George,' I said, 'why didn't you hold the floor a bit more instead of letting Johnson bring the house down all the time?'

He smiled. 'Oh, well,' he said, 'I was M.C. at whist, you know. I'd had my innings, and *Johnson was so happy.*'

How many 'story-telling' men I wonder would have done a fine thing like that? To be able to tell a better story, and not to tell it, that must have taken some doing, surely? Can we play the second fiddle?

## SERVE AND BE SERVED

February 12

A CHILD's kiss set on thy sighing lips shall  
make thee glad.

A poor man served by thee shall make thee  
rich.

A sick man helped by thee shall make thee  
strong.

Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
Of service which thou renderest.

## LEST WE FORGET

*February 13*

THEY built a Hall of Fame and met together to discuss the first memorial to be erected therein.

'Let us put up a memorial to Sir William A,' said one, he made five millions.'

'General B was worthy of the honour,' another suggested.

'The late Mr. C was the most distinguished man of letters,' said a third.

'Never was there a greater scientist than Professor D,' a fourth declared.

'Nor a more generous philanthropist than the Right Honourable E,' a fifth added.

Then a sixth said, 'I knew a plumber who put his heart and soul into his work—and got on with it. . . .'

And they erected the first memorial to him.

## YOU

*February 14*

ONCE upon a time there was a lady called Mrs. Smith who made some cakes, and they went bad. She said it was the maid's fault. She said it was the gas company. She said it was her youngest child who pestered her when she was baking. She said it was Mrs. Brown next door who kept her talking. But when she was in bed she thought, did I, or did I not, put any baking powder in those cakes?

If there is anything wrong in your life, it may be other people—and it may be you.

## HE KEPT GOING

*February 15*

HERE is a rhyme I found by chance in Derbyshire:

Here's to one who took his chances  
In a busy world of men,  
Battled luck and circumstances,  
Fought and fell, and fought again.

Won sometimes, but did no crowing,  
Lost sometimes, but did not wail;  
Took his beating, but kept going,  
Never let his courage fail.

He was fallible and human,  
Therefore loved and understood  
Both his fellow-men and women,  
Whether good or not so good.

Kept his spirit undiminished,  
Never let down on a friend;  
Played the game till it was finished,  
Lived a sportsman to the end.

## WIDE, EMBRACING, WONDROUS LOVE

*February 16*

IN times of stress we need to remind ourselves that

the love of God is broader  
Than the measures of man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

### THREE WHO HAD COURAGE

*February 17*

WILLIAM HENLEY:

It matters not how straight the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

NORMAN MACLEOD:

Courage, brother! Do not stumble,  
Though thy path is dark as night:  
There's a star to guide the humble—  
Trust in God, and do the right.

CHARLES WESLEY:

Thrice blest is he to whom is given  
The instinct that can tell  
That God is on the field when He  
Is most Invisible.

### THREE WITH FAITH

*February 18*

MILTON: I argue not

Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot  
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer  
Right onward.

SHAKESPEARE: We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail.

ST. PAUL: We walk by faith, not by sight.

## THE OTHER WAY ROUND

*February 19*

THERE is a story of a boy who said, 'Yes, this is my birthday. I've had my mother eight years to-day.'

It was a refreshing way of putting it.

Dare I say that sometimes it might be good for us to change our stereotyped, 'Thank God,' to, 'Can God be thankful for having me in His world so long?'

If we feel He cannot, surely it is about time we tried to live a little more graciously. At any rate, the thought stirs us to be conscious that God needs us just as we need Him.

## GOD WRITES A POEM

*February 20*

God said, 'I will set an eternal truth in a poem.' Then He made a fire-mist and a blazing sun, and a molten world which presently took shape. The hollows were filled with oceans, and life—simple and weak—appeared, and stirred, and became aware. There came a day when life was conscious of itself, troubled by a restlessness, a questioning of mind, a kindling of spirit because God had breathed on man and he had become a living soul. Of all creation man alone knew himself and One greater than himself. At the last there arose a man who wrote the 23rd Psalm!

So God's poem was written and His truth proclaimed, but the poem cost a universe to make.

## SNOWDROPS

February 21

HERE are the snowdrops in my garden. What *practical* use are they? I suppose nettles make a sort of medicinal wine, and clover is useful for feeding sheep. But snowdrops?

They have a great message. Justice gives what is right, necessity what is needful, but *love* gives us more than we need.

He lives most who loves most, and who loves most cannot give without giving lavishly, as God turns an inspiration into a love token, sending us snowdrops, not because we *need* them, but because He needs must give.

## TO A MAN IN DESPAIR

February 22

I know what it is to be at my wit's end and to see no way out of the terrible maze of things. I know what it is to look round for some means of escape and to find none; to have my own foolishness returning to me, and hurting me, and those I love most.

Friend, out of a maze of this sort one may never find the way. *But One who knows the maze may find you.*

If you can, try not to find the way for yourself, but to be led out of it. Know that no man ever yet entered so great a darkness that no light could shine in it. A way will appear—perhaps a hard way, but a way, and strength will be yours to walk therein.

## PATIENCE

*February 23*

I LIKE these lines by Stephanie Ormsby:

Lord, give me patience! Hope I have,  
But hopes are curses when they cry  
For swift fulfilment, lest they die.  
Patience, not hope, is truly brave.  
Give me a patience that will work  
With little things to little ends;  
That wealth of time and care expends  
On duties which the heart would shirk.

## A SAD THOUGHT

*February 24*

A SAD thought grows, as my bulbs have grown, in the dark.

Dwell on this sad thought, consider your misfortune, regard this injustice, turn over this disappointment, weep for this great loss, and this sad thought grows apace till the windows and doors of your life will not open, and a friend's kindness and God's love cannot get in.

But see my bulbs, how fragrant and beautiful they are!

I left them alone in the dark in the cupboard under the stairs. So with a sad thought. Leave it while you are busy with other things and living for other people, and one day you will find it with a touch of beauty and a redeeming fragrance, for God works miracles with bulbs and sad thoughts in the dark.

## SUMMER IS COMING

February 25

IF to-day is cold and cheerless, consider that summer is coming (even though it is far off). Think of blue skies, singing birds, gardens of colour and fragrance, brilliant sunshine, lovely trees, all the wonder of a summer's day! A little time and February will give place to June.

## ON BEING IN PRISON

February 26

THERE is a story of a man who was sent to prison, and sat in his cell and wept bitterly. The night came and he could see no stars. The day came and he could not go out. He sat there, wretched, almost insensible, grieving over his bitter misfortune. Thus sat he day after day and night after night.

And at last he rose from his wooden chair, and went to the door to beat his fists on it; and behold it was unlocked; and opening it he found himself in a lovely garden under a blue sky. So he walked home to liberty. The story says *the door had never been locked.*

Perhaps there was never a man so imprisoned between stone walls, but many men and women have been imprisoned in this way by grief and doubt and fear and sorrow and despair. Take courage, God will come and open the door for you if it is locked. But if not, you must stir yourself and give it a push.

## MUCH IN LITTLE

*February 27*

BEGIN to-day.

Keep a brave heart.

You are not your own.

You were made to fight, not to win.

Many a false step is made by standing still.

The wise man makes hay with the grass that grows under other men's feet.

The man next door may be fighting a hard battle.

You cannot be everything if you want to be anything.

To have made a mistake is bad. Not to profit by it is worse.

The sun will rise to-morrow morning.

## POOR MEN

*February 28*

THE old story says that when at last a happy man was found he had no shirt to his back. It is significant that many of the world's happiest men have been poor.

There was St. Francis of Assisi with a vast store of happiness; Diogenes, for whom a king could do no more than stand out of his light; Lord Shaftesbury, who gave away fabulous wealth and was enriched by the love of his fellows; Jesus Christ, Who said, 'All things are delivered to me of my Father,' and yet had nowhere to lay His head.

It is worth thinking about.

## THE EXTRA

*February 29*

HERE is February giving us an extra day.

You see, the extra creeps into the almanac, and is even found in mathematics, for the diameter of a circle divides into the circumference three times—and a bit over.

The glory of life is the bit over. To do our best, and then something more; to give and add a smile; to add cheerfulness to duty, courtesy to common kindness—this is to adorn living.

Rich indeed are those who to every common day add a few minutes' grace, so (when all are added together) making every year a Leap Year, its crown that most precious extra which is the giving back to God of what He first gave us.

## AN OLD PRAYER

*March 1*

PERHAPS this familiar prayer will mean more to us if we remember that sixty generations have prayed it:

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same by Thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by Thy governance, to do always that which is righteous in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## HITCH YOUR WAGON TO A STAR

*March 2*

THAT low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it:  
This high man with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.  
That low man goes on adding one to one,  
His hundred's soon hit:  
This high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses a unit.  
That, has the world here—should he need the  
next,  
Let the world mind him!  
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed,  
Seeking, shall find Him.

## AT HAND

*March 3*

THERE was once a man who wished to see the most beautiful thing in the world. So he set out to find it, and travelled over hills and plains, and crossed many seas, and saw much beauty, but he always thought there ought to be something lovelier.

At last, he turned again home—his heart beating quicker. He opened his own door and saw his wife, and knew instantly that she was what he had been looking for.

Perhaps your quest will end at home. Perhaps the work you love best is the familiar task, and happiness may be in your hand if only you will open it and look.

## MARCH WINDS

### *March 4*

UNSEEN, they are not unfelt. Mysterious, they are essential to the very existence of life. They purify the air, bring the rain, scatter pollen, perform a thousand necessary ministries. Imprison the winds, and life must cease.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit.

There is *life* in him. He lives to some purpose. The world is better for his presence in it.  
Breathe on us, breath of God.

## LISTENING

### *March 5*

I RANG the bell. I knocked at the door, and rang and knocked again. I opened the door and called out 'Is anyone at home?' No one replied. But there was a great noise, the tramp of feet on the bare boards, and a loud hammering.

I found John in the dining-room—he and his wife. They were spring-cleaning, and John was on his knees hammering a piece of linoleum near the French windows.

On his knees and he did not hear me.  
How many of us there are who do not hear God— even when we are praying on our knees, not because God will not answer, but because we are too noisy to hear Him.

## OPTIMISTS AND PESSIMISTS

March 6

'It will rain all the afternoon,' said Pessimist.

'There's a rift in the clouds,' said Optimist, taking his mackintosh and going out.

'I suppose there's no *milk* in that cream-jug,' said Pessimist.

'Do you mind passing the *cream*?' asked Optimist.

'The country is heading for ruin,' said Pessimist.

'It certainly looks like it,' said Optimist. 'It is time we tried to improve things a little.'

'We shall never get out of prison,' grumbled Pessimist.

'Perhaps one of the bars at the window is loose!' said Optimist, tugging at it; and when it came away he helped Pessimist out first and climbed out after him. So both escaped.

## AWKWARD PEOPLE

March 7

It is one thing charging the enemy, and another thing being amiable while Aunt Agatha stays three weeks longer than you had feared.

If she is one of those extremely angular individuals who have no wish to argue (but always do) and feel constrained to point out your mistake, and cannot see a joke, she will drive you to your knees in a prayer for grace to suffer awkward people cheerfully.

There are, I think, few nobler spirits than those who live day by day with unlovely spirits, and somehow keep their own loveliness.

## NEVER

*March 8*

NEVER say die.

Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.

Never leave till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

Never look a gift-horse in the mouth.

Never mind who was your grandfather, but consider who are you?

Never remember old grievances.

Never hang a man twice for one offence.

Never despise the day of small things.

Never think you are too old to improve.

Never grow weary in well-doing.

Never think you are everybody—it is the delusion of nobodies.

## ALWAYS

*March 9*

ALWAYS look on the bright side.

Always believe in the best.

Always do a thing as well as you can—even if you are not paid for it.

Always do to others as you would they should do to you.

Always put the best construction on a doubt.

Always look as if you are winning—you always will be.

Always turn your dark cloud inside out.

Always believe there is some good to be found in the bad.

Always have faith.

## SOME PEOPLE

*March 10*

I KNOW a man who goes to work on the railway with a Thomas à Kempis in his pocket. I know an old man who says, 'Well, after all, I can't expect to see things as some of these young people do.' I know a young fellow who said, 'It's worth listening to an old man talk—he stands on a higher hill than I do.' I know a woman who does not try to look younger than she is. I know a charwoman who scrubs offices all day, and sits up with a neighbour's daughter all night. I know a club member who can *listen* to another member for an hour.

What a lot of people I know who are living gracious lives. Do you know any?

## ONE THING WE KNOW

*March 11*

AMID the maddening whirl of things,  
When tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed stay my spirit clings,  
I know that God is good.  
I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.  
I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know *I cannot drift*  
*Beyond His love and care.*

## ARE YOU AFRAID?

*March 12*

ARE you dreading the day before you?

What can anyone say to you if this is so?

When I was little I dreaded going down a dark passage, and once, when I had gone no more than half a dozen paces, I heard a queer sound, felt an agony of terror, and throwing all bravery away, I ran madly. But I could run no faster than the demons behind. They kept pace with me.

So it is with all of us. Run away from the things you dread, and they grow bigger and more dreadful. Face the worst with a shred of courage and a trembling faith; be strong, be brave, and though the day will still bring its load of fear, your strength will be equal to it.

## COURAGE

*March 13*

*From the Book of Chronicles:* Take courage and do courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.

*From Deuteronomy:* Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them, for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee. He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

*From Joshua:* Only be thou strong and very courageous.

## PEACE AT THE LAST

*March 14*

FEW prayers are shorter, few more helpful or more beautiful than this:

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed. Then, Lord, in Thy mercy grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## THE IDES OF MARCH

*March 15*

THE Ides of March are come.

But they are not passed.

For Caesar they had a strange significance. For us they may have none.

But here is a new day. It has come, but it is not yet finished. Let us try to make it notable. Let us try to redeem it. Suppose we find one piece of good news in the newspaper? Suppose we write that letter? Suppose we make the apology we ought to have made long ago? Suppose we go out to do a gracious thing, or stay at home to be more amiable, or begin something worth beginning, or read a really good book, or help some one, or hide a grief, or strangle a grumble, will not the day be worthwhile?

The Ides of March are come.

They are not yet passed.

Let us use this day well.

## A PESSIMIST

*March 16*

'Do you know what a pessimist is?' asks Bernard Shaw. 'He is a man who thinks everybody as nasty as himself, and hates them for it.'

This is clever, but do not pass on until you have thought a moment. Perhaps here is a cruel, necessary word for you. Perhaps some of the deplorable things you think are in other people are really in you. You will not thank me for suggesting this. But there it is.

## CAPTAIN OATES GOES OUT

*March 17*

THOSE of you who sometimes think that human nature is a poor thing, and are inclined to believe that all men are selfish, remember that this day in 1912 a very gallant gentleman died alone in the snow.

He was Captain Oates, one of Scott's immortal heroes. Knowing he was ill and was therefore a handicap to the little company which was trying to reach the depot, he said this morning, 'I am just going outside, and may be some time.' Then, without a 'Good-bye', he left the tent, and walked into the blizzard till he fell.

It was a supreme act of sacrifice, and it did not happen in the dim past, but in your day.

## TOO NEAR TO BE SEEN

*March 18*

My friend had come home to find his wife dead on the kitchen floor. 'A lovely woman, not yet forty,' he said defiantly. 'Why, why? Tell me why? Is God in heaven?'

I took a photograph from the mantelpiece and pressed it against his face. I asked him whose photograph it was. Angrily he brushed it aside. 'How could I see the thing pushed up against my face like that?' he asked.

Then said I, 'John, can a thing be so near that you cannot see it? What of this terrible thing which has shattered your life? Will you not have patience, believing that some day—perhaps years ahead—you will look back, and begin to see dimly the hand of Providence in this thing which to-day looks like an act of vengeance?'

## ONE GOOD THING

*March 19*

Do not go to bed to-night till you have found one good thing.

There must be one—the bowl of flowers on a side table, a bit of good news on the wireless, a look your wife gave you, something your child said, a paragraph in the daily paper, a visit from a friend, a letter, a piece of business, a glorious sunset, a good intention, a fine idea, a lovely incident.

Find one thing, and be thankful.

## TO A LITTLE SCHOLAR

*March 20*

He went before me with his books, a little chap with a satchel over his back and a Latin Primer in his hand. He could not have been more than ten.

Little Scholar here is a word for you:

Let me tell you that such a dullard am I that I see no use in learning if it be not used hourly for the enrichment of others; and I would rather have you empty-headed and your heart full of love and chivalry, than have you know all there is to know and be unmoved by the world's eternal longing for friendliness.

Go Little Scholar, learn to live and love.

## THE VERY LITTLE THING

*March 21*

Now when I got to the hilltop I stood there in the wind and looked over the open country.

It was all wonderful.

Suddenly the scene was blotted out. The wonder, the glory, my quiet contemplation were destroyed by a speck of dust in my eye.

I felt the tears come; I turned homewards, now looking with two eyes, now with one.

And is it not often some very little thing in life—a little grievance long nursed; a burst of temper; a sense of injury; an estrangement due to next to nothing; a very slight misunderstanding—that spoils life.

The view is there—but we cannot see it.

## BIG TROUBLES

*March 22*

I SOMETIMES think that life's greatest blessings come to us wrapped up in shattering misfortune. Often we harass and worry and mope over trifling things, wearing ourselves out with cheese-parings of trouble till suddenly a thunderbolt crashes at our feet and all the ghosts of trouble are scattered as one real trouble starts into being. Then we have so much to do dealing with that one that we have no time for the little ones. And when at last we come through, we are purged and invigorated, and begin striding through life.

## WASHING AND PRAYING

*March 23*

'WHY, you see, mister,' said the old man, 'it's like this here, I says my prayers every night 'cos I don't want to be like that chap wot left home and never had no hair-cut nor no shave, and when he went back home and says, "Father, it's me," his father ups with a stick and drives him helter-skelter out of doors.

'You see, one day 'adn't made much difference with him not shaving and all that, but years of it had; and you see, mister, I'd sort a feel a bit shaken if some time I wanted the Lord pretty bad and started praying furious all at once, *and He didn't recognize my voice.*'

## MY CREDENTIALS

*March 24*

You may ask what right I have to come to you with my bit of good cheer. When we are in trouble is there anything we detest more heartily than a prating fool with his tags of good cheer and his easy assurance that all will come right in the end?

It seems to me that if the things I have gathered into this book are to be worth anything and are to strike home, I must produce my credentials.

I wrote this book while one I loved was dying. His faith was unshakable. I have borrowed a little from him.

## I KNOW THE WAY

*March 25*

HAVE suffered. I have walked in darkness and known unspeakable loneliness. I have had a grief I could not share.

Have you been weary in body and spirit? So have I, an utter weariness.

Have you known poverty? I have known it.

Is yours the story of one who loved and lost? I understand. So great was my love that I could give up the thing I loved most of all. Had I loved a little less I could not have lived without it.

Or remorse? It is with me now.

Yet one thing I keep. Not a light cheerfulness, but a deep, trusting happiness is mine.

## A MATCH IN THE DARK

*March 26*

Nor all the agony of life has been mine. Only a little has come my way, but it has taken from me the easy optimism I once had. It has left me something. It has left me the unshakable belief that no darkness is so great but what we ourselves can strike a match in it.

I do not come to you and say lightly, 'Laugh, and the world laughs with you.' I know the cost of it. I know what it is to feel that life holds nothing more for me. Yet I can say that grief is the very father of a deep understanding of life. I do not set out to prove to you that it is easy to be cheerful. I come to you to say, 'Courage! Be of good cheer, for you can still find much for which to be thankful.'

## THE COMMON FOLK

*March 27*

THE day Caxton printed his first book at Westminster a man and a maid were married in a country church. While Columbus was gazing on the New World for the first time a man in the Black Forest was chopping wood. A woman on the Yorkshire Wolds was rocking a cradle while Waterloo was fought. At the moment the order to cease fire was given in 1918, an old man on a Gloucestershire farm was ploughing.

So, while great events take place, the even tenor of life is entrusted to ordinary folk, and but for them there could be no great events.

## DO NOT THOU FORGET ME

*March 28*

AN Archbishop has said, 'It is our duty for the greater part of the day to forget God. If we did not forget God we should not be able to do our work in life.'

His words remind us of the prayer of that gallant Cavalier, Sir Jacob Astley, on the eve of the battle of Edgehill. 'Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me.' Then he gave the word of command. 'March on, boys!'

## WAITING

*March 29*

You are in trouble? What are you doing? Do you wrestle with it? Do you plan and scheme, and lie awake at night, and try to see a way out, and attempt to fight a way through? Perplexed, harassed, confused, weighed down with anxieties that make you old before your time, do you pit your strength against remorseless circumstances? It sounds heroic, but it may be foolish.

*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*

Not an idle waiting—but a sort of using the Almighty as a wall so that at least your troubles must be in front of you, and great as they are, it is good to know God is behind you. It gives you strength, confidence—and something more, a calm resolution which is infinitely more powerful than feverish desperation.

## FOUND

*March 30*

FOUND by me this day:

A bit of annoyance and two happy surprises.

Some trouble and more pleasure.

An angular gentleman and a host of delightful people.

Flowers in other people's gardens.

Laughter up my sleeve.

Two wretched letters that made me think hard—  
and one precious greeting from a friend.

A good Samaritan.

A gentleman of six. 'Please, can you tell me the time?' he asked.

A frown and many smiles.

Have *you* found anything good?

## THE CROW AND THE PITCHER

*March 31*

HERE is a bit of 'news' from Greece:

A crow almost dying of thirst found a pitcher which had a little water in the bottom. But the crow was not able to reach the water, though he tried hard. At last he noticed a number of pebbles lying about, and after much trouble and labour he dropped them in one by one till the level of the water was raised to the brim. So he was able to drink.

Then, adds Aesop, 'Where there's a will there's a way.'

It was true in his day. It is true in ours.

## APRIL SHOWERS

*April 1*

BRILLIANT sunshine, a blue sky, a lark overhead, and then white clouds roll up against the sun and the silver rain beats down. But look up and see a rainbow in the sky.

Is it not true that some of us would never find the best in ourselves if we never had to weather a storm? Some of us, perhaps, find God in lovely things and in quiet hours of meditation; but some of us would miss Him altogether if we did not see His rainbow in our dark sky.

If it is April outside with you now and November in your heart, come into the open air and see the storm illuminated with an everlasting promise.

## TRACE THE RAINBOW THROUGH THE RAIN

*April 2*

GEORGE MATHESON has two verses to help us when we suffer:

O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
*I trace the rainbow through the rain,*  
And feel the promise is not vain  
That morn shall tearless be.

## RESURRECTION

*April 3*

FROM Calvary to Ascension, is it a miracle of one time and place?

I have seen resurrection in my own garden. Every year the new life of a new springtime is a *Te Deum* of praise. Graves are but cradles, kindly, and miraculous. Old age is but the prelude to youthful glory. Oh, brave new world that has such wonder in it! God help me to take this fresh wind as a symbol of an ever-working spirit that lives and moves in all of us. There is no end and no beginning. Ends are but turns in a great wheel of marvellous life, wonderful in nature, immeasurably splendid in human life.

## PRESSING HARD

*April 4*

HAVING dug the soil over I made a shallow trench and scattered the seeds in it. Then I gently raked the soil over them, pressed it down lightly, and stood up to survey my handiwork.

Apparently my neighbour had been looking over the wall, for he said quietly, 'No, it won't do. It's plain you're no gardener. You've got them about the right depth and the right distance apart, but you'll have no flowers if you do not press the soil down hard—quite hard.' Then after a pause he added, 'You see, *the harder it is for the plants to come up, the better they are.*'

## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

*April 5*

'COUNT your blessings' is good advice. This book of good cheer does not suggest that evils do not exist. I am not so foolish as to think that if a man count the good things it will not be possible for another to count the bad.

I know a man who loves to walk in the lanes and fields, and to take his dog with him. He looks round and sees lovely trees, and the wonder of the sky. He listens to the singing of a lark. But his little dog goes nosing into all the unpleasant corners. That is his way.

Of course, you can count your troubles, but are there no blessings?

## MAGIC DAYS

*April 6*

A NEVER-FAILING miracle is the miracle of Spring! Its transforming handiwork is wonderful, its energy stupendous. It comes silently and secretly, sweeping away the debris of the old year, and creating a new earth in the sunshine of these magic days!

There are some (God's pity on them) who declare the age of miracles is past! Are they blind? Are they insensible to the rushing inspiration of this quickening season?

The age of miracles is not past. It will never pass as long as God makes colour from dull matter, music from silence, life from death.

## OPPOSITION

*April 7*

SCIENCE tells us that life probably began in the form of some simple creature inhabiting the primeval sea. Why did it not remain in that form?

The answer, though a paradox, is a fundamental principle of development. Whatever made existence hard made it good! Whatever seemed to hinder progress made progress possible! Whatever made for apparent failure made for conquest, and the very struggle for existence made existence worthy of the struggle!

We cannot read the amazing story of Evolution without realizing that progress has been made *because* (and not in spite) of innumerable hindrances. Had existence always been easy, and environment always favourable, there could have been little change in the form and less improvement in the worth of life.

## WELCOME EACH REBUFF

*April 8*

THE law of opposition is a vital principle of our everyday living. We must oppose opposition, not aggressively, but bravely.

Then welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!  
Be our joys three parts pain,  
Strive, and hold cheap the strain,  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never  
grudge the throe!

## REJOICE

*April 9*

REJOICE and sing praise.

Rejoice ever more and pray without ceasing.

Rejoice with joy unspeakable.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad for ye are the light  
of the world.

I will make them rejoice from their sorrow.

The bones thou hast broken may rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with  
hem that weep.

## THE BRISTOL DONKEY

*April 10*

ONCE had lunch with a man I knew only slightly,  
and in conversation I happened to mention I had  
met a mutual acquaintance in Bristol. He looked  
up (and through me) and said smiling, 'Ah, yes,  
Bristol! That's where the donkey was!'

He did it thoughtlessly and was (I think) ashamed  
of it.

He explained that he had not been to Bristol for  
forty years, and that he had always thought of it as  
a green field where, as a very tiny fellow, he had  
loved to feed a donkey.

So, for him, Bristol with all its wealth and history  
and romance was the place where the donkey was.

Isn't it strange how little things lodge in our  
minds? Haven't you found it so?

## THE MADMAN

*April 11*

ONCE upon a time (I do not know whether it was last year or before the Flood) there was a gardener (I am not sure whether he was English or a Scotch Jew) who had a glorious garden. Every one who went by stopped to look; so he put a big wall round; but one day he spied an old man looking down from an upper window, so he roofed his garden with something (either Roman tiles or corrugated iron). *Then all the flowers faded.*

Consider this.

## THE AMAZING THING

*April 12*

WHEN you have counted all the unlovely people, when you have found all the evils, when you have bemoaned everything that is wrong; when you have found all the ugliness and shame, the amazing thing is that so much good is left.

That is where I take my stand as an optimist. It is not that there is nothing to condemn in the world and in human nature; it is that when the worst has been gathered it makes only a small part of the good. I do not close my eyes to the bad, but I am daily astonished at the good: at the brave, kind people; the little heroisms and sacrifices, the sanctities of the home; honour in business; the vast store of good crowded among much we deplore.

## WHAT LOVE CAN DO

*April 13*

I LIKE that story of the old mother who went to Aldershot to see her soldier son, and came home to say proudly to her neighbours, 'Eh, bless you, I saw the dear lad! He was marching with a lot more, *and they were all out of step but our John.*'

Was it love that made her blind, or was it love that gave her eyes to see beyond the little fault to the great good in that dear lad?

Even faults can be virtues if we love greatly, and a splendid love enables us to see hidden good, to forgive what otherwise would be unforgivable, and to find something precious where others would find only the commonplace.

## THE GREATEST OF THESE

*April 14*

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

## LAUGHTER AND SINGING

*April 15*

As long as there are birds and children, there will be music and singing—and that precious thing God made as an afterthought, laughter. It is the stumbling-block of the pessimists. When they have painted a masterly picture of desolation, somebody laughs, and that kills everything (except the pessimists), or rather, it electrifies every one to new vigour, and gives us daring to try again.

## THE NEW DETECTIVES

*April 16*

I SHOULD like to organize a New Detective Agency.

How glorious to shadow a saint! What thrilling adventures my agents would have tracking down a practical business-man, and discovering that he was none other than the uncle of two waifs, and that on Saturday afternoons with malice and aforethought he secretly took them to the talkies!

In the twilight my detectives should hear mothers whispering stories to little children; and early in the morning they should be on the watch for charwomen beginning the day with tired feet, but smiling faces. I believe our streets are full of gentle men; our warehouses manned by heroes; our fields ploughed by saints; our shops kept by Godly men; our homes full of lovely women.

Will you be one of my detectives?

## THE BEST LIGHT

*April 17*

AN artist friend of mine showed me some of his work this afternoon. I was interested. He specializes in still-life, and some of his studies have brought him considerable success.

We talked about art. 'And of course,' he said, 'one thing to remember is to put your model in the best light. It is the only way to see it properly.'

And I meditated upon this coming home.

If it is true of still-life, how much more true of human life. Before you draw conclusions about that man or this woman, put him or her in the best light, that you may see the good as well as the bad; that the best in them may shine out clearly, and all the glory be made plain. Give other people a chance before summing up their character. Put them in the best light—the light you would want to be in yourself, if they were looking at you.

## THE WONDER OF SPRING

*April 18*

THE spring again is here;  
Life awakes from winter's gloom;  
In field and forest far and near  
Sweet opening flowers bloom.  
Lord, touch our careless eyes;  
New life, new ardours bring,  
That we may read Thy mysteries,  
The wonder of Thy spring.

## A TWENTIETH-CENTURY CALVARY

*April 19*

LET me tell you of a Calvary of our own day.

I came to a village with a War Memorial, and chatted with a man near by. 'You have a War Memorial, I see,' I said. 'You would know the heroes?'

He nodded. 'One was my son,' he said.

'He was a grand lad,' he went on. 'A grand lad. He had great ideals—and I hadn't. I never went to church, and I did a bit of drinking and gambling—and so on. Then Ben was shot at Hill 60. And somehow,' he added quietly, his face radiant, 'I've lived a bit finer since that day. *I guess he had to go down to lift me up.*'

## A GREEN HILL

*April 20*

THERE is a green hill far away  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell  
What pains He had to bear;  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good,  
That we might go at last to heaven,  
Saved by His precious blood.

## IN PRAISE OF LEGS

*April 21*

I JUMPED out of bed this morning. I went down the stairs. I walked from the hall to the dining-room. I walked into the garden. I walked down the road. I walked across the road. I stood talking to a man.

Are you tired of all this? Do you think it puerile? Perhaps it is, but when I came home this afternoon there was some one sitting by the fire who could scarcely move a hand; and as for running upstairs, that was impossible for him.

## STARS AND BLUEBELLS

*April 22*

WE do well sometimes to cheer ourselves by remembering the good we have, for most of us take much of our wealth for granted, and get into the habit of regarding blessings as common necessities. We look far away for wealth while all the time it is inside our waistcoat—a sound heart pumping evenly. We dream of the great house we shall live in some day, and all the time we forget that the wife at home is a treasure worth all the great houses in the country. We are like the man Theodore Patton writes about when he says:

Some name him great because his eye  
Is always focused far;  
But, oh, the bluebells sweet he tramples,  
Searching for a star.

## A FEW GOOD THINGS

*April 23*

A BUSINESS man who said, 'I see indication of an improvement in my trade.'

A child with a bunch of flowers.

A woman who ran to raise a little fellow who had fallen.

A man singing at his work.

A young fellow who said, 'Well, you know, I told him that it wasn't quite straight, and I'd rather not have anything to do with it.'

A letter saying, 'It's hard, but I'm trying again.'

A tree in a back yard.

So, common things redeem the common day.

## REMEMBER HER

*April 24*

THREE of us had a funeral service in the train this evening. We talked about the old country, and made ourselves gloriously depressed, concluding that things were in a very bad way.

And as I came from the station I overtook a girl. I have seen her grow up from a little mite to a gracious woman, a university student. She told me rather hesitantly that she had decided to go to the Straits as a missionary.

It thrilled me. It shamed me. There is much wrong with the world, but youth still has selfless visions. God be thanked for these brave souls moved by a rare spirit of sacrifice to do noble things.

## ADVERSITY

*April 25*

**ECCLESIASTES:** 'In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.'

**SHAKESPEARE:** 'Sweet are the uses of adversity.'

*From* **THOMAS À KEMPIS:** 'Our dependence on God ought to be so entire that we should never think it necessary in any kind of distress to need human consolation.'

**SPURGEON** *says:* 'God gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.'

**JESUS CHRIST** (*in His agony*): 'If it be possible, let this cup be taken from Me.' Then, splendid hero that He was, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

## HOW THEY DIED

*April 26*

**COLUMBUS** *saying:* 'Into Thy hand I commend my spirit.'

**NURSE CAVELL** with no bitterness or hatred in her heart.

**MRS. BARBAULD** at her desk after having written: 'Say not "Good night," but in some brighter clime, bid me "Good morning"!'

**NEWTON**—the wisest man of his age—after *saying:* 'I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.'

**JOHN WESLEY** *saying:* 'Praise!'

**STEPHEN** with his face shining.

**JESUS CHRIST** forgiving His enemies.

## HAPPINESS

*April 27*

If it is happiness you are seeking, you will not find it next Tuesday. It is not in a field near the road to Timbuctoo. It does not lie hidden in a bank, nor in the garden of the rich man on the hill. Kings have not a store of it, and business firms have no monopoly. It is in you. You make it of everything—good and bad alike. Not all the world can make it for you, but a little child can make it for himself.

## THE OTHER SIDE ✓

*April 28*

LET us remember that there are millions of patient mothers in the world; there are honest businessmen; there are normal, decent people in every continent; there are at least a few worthy citizens in every town; there are friendships that have never been broken; there are quiet men and women doing good; there are boys and girls to keep the world young and sweet; there are noble thinkers among us whose thoughts elevate and enrich; there are hard workers who get on with the world's work without making a fuss; there are clean-minded people and broadminded people; there are good neighbours; there are serious people to balance the flippant, and humorous people to undo the evil done by cynics; there are good people everywhere.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY

*April 29*

AWAKE, my soul, and with the sun  
The daily stage of duty run;  
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise  
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Let all thy converse be sincere;  
Thy conscience as the noonday clear;  
For God's all-seeing eye surveys  
Thy secret thoughts, thy words, and ways.

WHEN THE DAY IS DONE

*April 30*

GLORY to Thee, my God, this night,  
For all the blessings of the light;  
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,  
Beneath thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me Lord, for Thy dear Son,  
The ill that I this day have done,  
That with the world, myself, and Thee,  
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

O may my soul on Thee repose,  
And may sweet sleep mine eyelids close,  
Sleep that shall me more vigorous make,  
To serve my God when I awake.

## THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

May 1

THIS is the merry month of May.

If you have a grief, if you are anxious, if some calamity has crashed into your life, you cannot be merry.

But some who have not a merry heart might have one. It is odd that some of us are half ashamed of being happy. With a fair share of life's riches and no more than a sprinkling of trouble, we studiously cultivate a cautious habit of being 'Fairly well, thank you.' We reluctantly admit that 'On the whole, business is better than it was,' and are quick to add, 'but nothing near what it ought to be, *of course*.' (What is the reason for the 'of course' one wonders?)

Come, here is a new day in a new month. Let us be of good cheer—and show it.

## FOUR THINGS

May 2

IF you have a cheerful spirit, find some one who is sad.

If you are strong, find some one who is weak. Lend your strength to them.

If you are friendly, find some who are lonely. Enrich them with your friendship.

If you have known trouble, find some one in trouble. Go to them and tell them the story of your suffering, of your disappointment, of the agony you have passed through. It will be hard to do it, but your understanding will help them.

## A LITTLE GOOD

*May 3*

I FELL asleep and dreamed a dream, and behold a King walking through his domain lighted upon a very Great Man, who, being questioned as to what he did, replied. 'Sire, I imprison evil-doers.' And next the King found a very Great Man who explained that he was destroying ugly buildings and unhealthy slums. A little farther on the King found a third very Great Man who said, 'Sire, I am sweeping away out-worn creeds and foolish customs.' And at last the King entered a quiet garden, and the gardener, a very Little Man, said, 'Sire, I grow roses.'

Then the King commanded that the gardener be made the Second Man in the Kingdom, 'For,' said he, 'it is better to create a little good than to destroy much evil!'

## THE PRAYER OF A BUSY MAN

*May 4*

LORD, I have a hundred and one things to do to-day, and innumerable things to think about, and countless little anxieties and worries to harass me.

Grant that I may have strength to do all I have to do, and to do it well. Grant that I may have grace to do my work without making it a burden to others; and above all consecrate me to noble service. Help me to find time and opportunity in the busiest day to be friendly, wisdom to be understanding, strength to be gentle.

## THE WORTH OF THINGS

*May 5*

WHAT is a thing worth to you?

It is worth what you would lose if you lost it.

Why is it that death comes at the last and separates us? Does it not come because only by the realization that our relationships are finite can we set a right value on them? If your little chatterbox of four were always to be four, never growing older, and with never a chance of being taken from you, would you cherish his winning ways, his quaint words, his lovely bit of life? Lose him, and what is he worth then? Think of the possibility of loss, and with his warm arms round your neck you get some idea of all he means to you.

So loss and death are our friends, making things precious while we have them.

## THE POOL OF PEACE

*May 6*

EVERY TOUGH man will tell you that it is only a few miles from Ypres, and that it has a gathered radiance, a width, a shining peace.

It was made in 1916, a charge of 91,000 lbs. of ammonal being exploded. The explosion made a hole 40 feet deep and 250 feet wide, a ghastly crater in a stricken area.

But Tubby Clayton called it a pool of peace where man's wrath is God's praise, and now with God's rain in it, it is a lovely thing.

## THIS CENTURY AND LAST

May 7

YEARS ago,' writes Sir Ben Turner, 'I went down to the prison at Wakefield to see a man who had been sent there for stealing. The first words he asked were, "How is the wife and the lad?"'

'He loved them. He was not bad all through—not y a long way.

'People may shout about badness being predominant. The country is full of good men and women, and there are more than ever. If I did not know and feel that folk were cleaner, kinder, and socially, morally, and generally better this century than last should not want to go on living.'

## LITTLE GEMS FROM GREAT MINDS

May 8

SPURGEON: If you cannot be a lighthouse, you can be a nightlight.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: We must all hang together, or we shall hang separately.

GOETHE: It is better to do the idlest thing in the world than to sit idle half an hour.

SAMUEL JOHNSON: It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.

NELSON: England expects every man to do his duty.

WENDELL PHILLIPS: One on God's side is a majority.

GENERAL GRANT (*to Lincoln*): I was successful because you believed in me.

## APRIL SHOWERS AND MAY FLOWERS

*May 9*

THERE is wisdom in the old rhyme about April showers bringing May flowers. How true it is.

But for wet, unpleasant days how could we have the sweet wonder of this month? Out of the mud comes the fragrance of the countryside. Out of the rain comes nectar. Out of the grey skies come the thousand colours of these joyous spring days. He was a philosopher who said gaily:

It is not raining rain to me,  
It's raining daffodils;  
In every dimpled drop I see  
Wild flowers on distant hills.

God help you, friend, to carry this thought over from the realms of nature to the rainy days of life, so that every misfortune may be to you the earth wherein happiness may take root, and every April day bring you the sure promise of May flowers.

## A DISCOVERY

*May 10*

I NEVER knew how many friends I had till I made the acquaintance of misfortune. People I had hardly thought about twice came hurrying to see me, sent me beautiful and encouraging messages, called to ask if there was anything they could do to help, wanted to share my trouble. It was wonderful. Perhaps it is true that rats forsake a sinking ship, but adversity is almost sure to bring us new and enriching friendships. I have found it so.

## TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

*May 11*

TO-DAY the flowers by the wayside praise God with sweetest looks! The clouds reveal the glory of the Lord; the wind sings an age-old Magnificat that is for ever new; and the birds, pouring out their rapture in unpremeditated melody, fill the earth with gladness.

By day the trees lift up living candles burning green flames, and by night the silent stars spell out the name of the Almighty! The whole world is beating with abundant life, and all life proclaims the boundless love of God.

I alone stand amid this kindling glory and am silent . . . silent because my heart is too full of gratitude for me to join the hymn of praise.

## WESTWARD LOOK!

*May 12*

BE of good cheer—the mills of God grind slowly.

Say not the struggle naught availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain;  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

For not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light;  
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!  
But westward, look, the land is bright!

## THE HAPPY PEOPLE

May 13

Who are they?

A man may have riches and be happy. And a man may be poor and be happy. Not in our possessions, nor in our want of them, does happiness consist, but in something transcending the possession or the want.

Perhaps it will be worth spending ten days of a year to make quite sure we know who the happy people are.

Let us, then, see what the Happiest Man of the Ages has to say about them. And let us remember that He was a Man of Sorrows.

## THE POOR IN SPIRIT

May 14

He says: Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In the Greek these *poor* may be read as beggars, and beggars have but one business in life—to ask alms.

Happy are the people who ask God for things. Perhaps wealthier in spirit than all other men, they are still conscious of the greater wealth they might enjoy. They are never self-satisfied. Their glory is that they feel the need of God (though perhaps they are most conscious of Him), and their need is their strength.

Happy are they for they ask of God, and their consciousness of poverty makes them richer than kings.

## THEY THAT MOURN

*May 15*

Who but a genius or a madman would say in a single breath, 'Happy are they that mourn'?

Have we lived so short a time that we do not yet know that all life is a paradox?

Go into the street and bring me a truly happy person who has not suffered some great loss. You cannot. We have to lose things to know how much we love them.

The loss may crush us. But the miracle is that we may rise above it, get a depth of understanding, and draw closer to the centre of life (where God is), and so have a deep, calm joy.

## THE MEEK

*May 16*

They shall inherit the earth, says Jesus in a startling phrase. It is startling because you associate meekness with weakness.

Meekness is strength, the will to do and to dare, but these things held in leash, and the leash is submission to what a man believes to be the highest and best. It is a sort of consecration of our best selves.

And are not the supremely happy people those who, instead of railing against circumstances, meekly accept what they feel to be God's will for them, and glorify it by faithful service?

They are those who do what lies nearest at hand, doing it as unto God; and they inherit nothing but good.

## THE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY

*May 17*

WHAT is one of the first indications of illness? Is it not loss of appetite?

So too with our spiritual life—and happiness is something spiritual. To have no hunger or thirst after better, higher, nobler things is to be spiritually unwell.

Happy are they who are always hungering and thirsting after goodness, always empty, yet in a sense always filled. That is, they are healthy.

## THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY

*May 18*

HAPPY are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

It has always seemed to me that this is the beginning of a long chapter—the rest of it being left to our imagination. Surely we can fill it in from experience—happy are they that do good, for good shall be done to them; happy are they who help others, for they shall be helped (by men or by God). So we might go on.

It is not only that the merciful obtain mercy. It is an illustration of the law of life—we receive what we give.

It is true of all happy people.

Live for yourself alone, and you are left to yourself alone. Do good to others, and it shall not return to you void. Enrich others, and God enriches you. Show mercy, and the everlasting mercy is yours.

## THE UNCLOUDED VISION

May 19

ONLY the pure in heart can see God.

Does not my suspicion of you prevent me from seeing you as you are? You come to me with the best intentions, but because I think you are not to be trusted, I misunderstand your show of kindness. So it is between us and God. What is impure in *us* makes us unable to see *Him*, or to know His ways.

But the happy people are those whose thoughts lie open to His sight, who have nothing to hide, who are pure in thought. They *know* all is well.

## THE PEACEMAKERS

May 20

THEY shall be called the children of God. So are we all, but these in a special sense, for they shall come nearer to Him.

You cannot live at peace with all men without a bigness of spirit, without a largeness of heart, without meekness. In a world like this, peace is dearly bought—you have to pocket your pride to buy it, and that is done, not by weak men, but by strong men only.

And then, these people who keep the peace, because they love greatly, come closer to their fellows, and we cannot come closer to one another without being nearer to God—for the nearer the spokes of the wheel draw to each other, the nearer they are to the centre.

## REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDING GLAD

*May 21*

HAPPY are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Was not Stephen's face radiant as he fell?

Is it not true that all men and women who have convictions and are true to them must suffer? Can a man take up his cross without feeling the weight of it? Can we follow one who was despised and rejected without earning a little of the contempt thrown at him?

Yet how glorious to share it!

Look round the world to-day, look back into the yesterdays, and you must see that the happiest people have been those who lost heavily in one direction, but more than made it up in another.

## THE SUPREME ACT

*May 22*

Now, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, riseth from supper, and took a towel and poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet.

So, after he had washed their feet he said, Know ye what I have done? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

## CHURCHYARD CHEER

*May 23*

HE made faith in goodness possible to others.  
Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed  
much.

What I gave I have.

What I spent I had.

What I left I lost.

He lit fires in empty rooms.

For him the flowers grew, and little children  
smiled.

She was blade straight and steel true.

*On the grave of W. H. HUDSON:* He loved birds,  
and green places, and the wind upon the heath, and  
saw the brightness of the skirts of God.

*Of a sailor:*

He put his trust in Providence,

And cared not how it blew.

## MY VIEW

*May 24*

It has always seemed to me that religion and philosophy can be reduced to a few very simple terms. There is God, and it is easier to believe in Him than to disbelieve. Trust Him, and love your neighbour. Live as near to Jesus Christ as you can. Pray for His spirit. Do your best. Keep smiling. And do not forget that other people are trying to get to heaven as well as you.

## LIFE

*May 25*

ONCE upon a time there was a shipwrecked sailor on an island. He had no fine house, so he built himself a little hut to keep the wind off, and was very thankful it was snug and dry. He had no car to take him round the island, so he walked—and whistled as he went to make the going easier, for there were many big stones in the way. There was no friend for him to talk to, but he remembered the good friendships he had known. He could have sat all day musing on the lucky folk in the West End of London who had not half the trouble he had, but fortunately he had little time for this as his dinner took a good deal of catching.

One day he made a boat out of all sorts of things never intended to be made into a boat. Using some of the big stones as ballast, he launched his boat, committed himself to God, and after many days reached the haven where he wished to be.

## DESPAIR

*May 26*

‘CHEER up!’ said the Cockney. ‘You’ll soon be dead!’ It was his way of saying, ‘Never despair.’ Remember how Christian, a prisoner in Doubting Castle and in the grip of Giant Despair, found a way of escape, a key (in his own heart) which unlocked all doors.

Be of good courage. Have great faith.  
Believe, and keep your powder dry!

## IT COULDN'T BE DONE

*May 27*

SOMEBODY said it couldn't be done,  
But he with a chuckle replied  
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.  
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin  
On his face. If he worried, he hid it,  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, *and he did it.*

## THE BRAVE AND STRONG

*May 28*

BRAVE Anne Brontë died young this day in 1849.  
When they opened her desk they found these lines:

I HOPED that with the brave and strong  
My portioned task might lie;  
To toil amid the busy throng,  
With purpose pure and high.  
But God has fixed another part,  
And He has fixed it well;  
I said so with my bleeding heart,  
When first the anguish fell.  
With secret labour to sustain  
In humble patience every blow;  
To gather fortitude from pain,  
And hope and holiness from woe.  
Thus let me serve Thee from my heart,  
Whate'er may be my written fate;  
Whether thus early to depart,  
Or yet awhile to wait.

## THE MANGLE

*May 29*

THE leading daily papers had long obituary notices of Sir John. He was President of this, and founder of that. He had built up the great firm of X and X. In Parliament he was progressive. In international affairs he was a power for good. In the cause of home industries he was for ever planning great campaigns. But the greatest tribute paid to him was one paid by a washerwoman who said that years ago when he had called at her house to see her husband, and had found her with a blanket which would go no further into and would not come out of the mangle, he had turned the handle for her.

Often the big things we do are soon forgotten, the little ones become living epitaphs.

## THREE KISSES A PENNY

*May 30*

YEARS ago they had a delightful custom at Newnton in Wiltshire, for on this day a maid of the town wearing a garland of flowers was to claim three kisses from a bachelor of another parish, and also the fee of one penny.

If she were fair and altogether bewitching, how cheap three kisses were.

But remember that a good mother, a loving wife, a brother worthy of the name, these will give a whole life (and a life of service and sacrifice) and ask not even a penny. If some one is doing this for you to-day, be thankful—and be worthy.

## AN EVERLASTING TRUTH

*May 31*

THIS one thing bear in mind, that you cannot make other people happy without making happiness for yourself.

A man wrapped in himself makes a very small parcel, but a man who lives a selfless life, who goes about doing good quietly and cheerfully and constantly, has happiness which is for ever springing up in him.

## THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE

*June 1*

It is glorious for us, not because a battle was fought, but because every day is a new opportunity, a new revelation of God. Let us begin this day with the greatest of all hymns of praise:

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell;  
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

O enter, then, His gates with praise;  
Approach with joy His courts unto;  
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is for ever sure;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.

## PRAISE IN COMMON THINGS

June 2

FILL Thou my life, O Lord my God,  
In every part with praise,  
That my whole being may proclaim  
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lips of praise alone,  
Nor e'en the praising heart,  
I ask, but for a life made up  
Of praise in every part.

*Praise in the common things of life,  
Its goings out and in;  
Praise in each duty, and each deed,  
However small and mean.*

## STANDING IN YOUR OWN LIGHT

June 3

IF I were asked what is the most pathetic thing in the world I think I should say it is to be living in the sunshine and to think it is midnight! Many of us see our shadow across our path and think it is the shadow of an enemy. We deliberately go out of the way to make trouble for ourselves, and complain when we succeed in making it.

We should sit down and look into our own life and say, 'Is there anything wrong in the very centre? Am I the cause of other people's dislike of me? Is it my own foolishness that is sending things wrong?' It often is.

## ALCHEMY

*June 4*

If you wished to be a famous violinist and are measuring yards of tape, you can eat your heart out, fall into a decline, and drop out of the scheme of things, a rather melodramatic thing, but tragic because you are not present to hear the faint applause after your last act. Or you can accept the inevitable, and take the thing you hate, and shape it day by day till by the miracle of your own making you find yourself becoming interested in the thing you despised; till you discover some bit of good in the monotony that was killing you.

## THE ETERNAL NOW

*June 5*

THEY were wise old writers who told stories of enchanted castles which kept their distance from those who travelled towards them. Such stories are parables of life.

Only one thing can you lay hands on and be satisfied, and that is the Eternal Now. Always to be looking forward to to-morrow is to be always discontented with to-day.

The cheerful man takes what he has and is thankful for it. In the doing of this present thing he finds joy. This does not mean he has no anticipation, but it does mean that instead of shuffling through *this* anyhow so that he may get to *that* and live, he lives in the doing of this, making it a worth-while thing in itself.

## FOR GOD IS EVERYWHERE

June 6

THERE's not of grass a single blade,  
Or leaf of loveliest green,  
Where heavenly skill is not displayed  
And heavenly wisdom seen.

There's not a star whose twinkling light  
Shines on the distant earth,  
And cheers the silent gloom of night,  
But God has given it birth.

There's not a place on earth's vast round,  
In ocean deep or air,  
Where skill and wisdom are not found;  
*For God is everywhere.*

## GIVING

June 7

CARLYLE says, Give us the man who sings at his work.

WORDSWORTH says, Give unto me the spirit of self-sacrifice.

HERBERT says, Give thy need thine honour, and thy friend his due.

MILTON says, Give me the liberty to think.

EMERSON says, Give me insight into to-day.

HAWEIS says, Give God the margin of eternity to justify Himself in.

JESUS says, *Give, and it shall be given unto you.*

## THE LAMP

*June 8*

THERE is a light in every man. Perhaps it can never go out, but it can burn low.

By this light we see our way and the faces of those about us. Nothing, therefore, is more important in life than that we shall keep the light clear and steady.

God kindles the flame, and from Him alone we receive spirit to keep it burning. We cannot take it from Him. We must wait for it to come. This waiting is prayer. A hundred forms of prayer there are, but to my mind, one thing is common to all—receptivity.

God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

## PENTECOST

*June 9*

WE read how at Pentecost the spirit entered all who were in the upper room. But Pentecost does not come once a year only. It may come with a soul-shaking power once only in a lifetime, but less spectacularly it comes every day.

It comes when we pray.

Not when we formally bow the knee (our thoughts on material things), nor when we repeat meaningless phrases is it bound to come. It may come then. But always it comes when we open our hearts toward God that His spirit may come in and revive the light within us. This outpouring of Himself into us is prayer, the never-failing Pentecost.

## TO-DAY

*June 10*

So here hath been dawning  
Another blue day;  
Think wilt thou let it  
Slip useless away?  
Out of Eternity  
This new day was born;  
Into Eternity  
At night will return.  
Behold it aforetime  
No eye ever did;  
So soon it for ever  
From all eyes is hid.

## THE BROAD ARCH

*June 11*

LORD, forgive me this day for taking a frowning face  
into a smiling world.

Thou knowest I have a few things to be troubled  
about (though I confess not so many as I had  
imagined), and Thou knowest life is not as easy as  
it might be, and I have a good deal to contend with  
(though it is certain both Jones and Robinson are  
worse off, and Brown looks like becoming bankrupt),  
but, Lord, I am a bit ashamed of walking in thy  
fair world with a spirit so ungracious.

Lord, forgive me for being too much troubled  
with myself and too little observant of all the glory  
round me. Make me humbly worthy to walk under  
the broad arch of Thy blue sky.

## SHE WEPT AMONG LIVING GOLD

*June 12*

THERE is a pathetic story of a woman from the London slums who was taken from the neighbourhood of the Old Kent Road to see the wonder of the countryside one June day.

She found herself in a field of buttercups, and melted down and wept. When they asked her why, she said, 'It would have been so much easier to have been good in a world like this.'

If this comes to some one who never sees a fresh green meadow, here is a wish that you may find it possible to live a beautiful life in ugly surroundings. And if this comes to you who can see a lovely world every day, may it be a challenge to you.

## A MILLION MILLION BLADES

*June 13*

Is it not a staggering thought that in a single meadow there are millions of blades of grass? The biggest field is green with multitudes of small blades.

So life is made up—not of a few outstanding deeds or moments—but of a mighty host of small actions and tiny incidents.

We should try to fill the year with precious moments, to redeem cares and worries by a courage and good temper that will make others love us, finding strength in us, and blessing us at the end of the journey, not for achieving great things, but for bringing a great idealism to small things.

## A GALLANT SOUL

June 14

THIS was his birthday. I needs must think of him. No more gallant soul ever smiled and suffered as he did. His life was twenty-two years, and in it he knew constant anguish. He knew loneliness and fear. He had to face one operation after another. He fell from running to walking, from walking to creeping upstairs. For years he could not move from his chair. He saw life slipping swiftly through his fingers. The things he loved most were taken from him one by one. Born into a big world, he daily watched it closing in on him, till at the last there was no room to breathe, and one springtime he passed on, suffering and smiling! *He was my brother.*

He has a message for you. If you suffer more than he did, whine, curse to your heart's content. But if not, be gallant-hearted, and smile on.

## A POINT OF VIEW

June 15

It is the month of roses, and perhaps you know that story of the grumbler who said with a sigh, 'What a pity that roses have thorns.'

Then answered a brave, sensible friend, '*What a good thing thorns have roses.*'

The principle can be applied to every part of life. Try it, and see if it does not help you to get a better point of view.

## THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

*June 16*

THERE are some people who tell you that you must go to Nature to find yourself. They say that Nature leads them up to God.

But Nature gives us back only what we take. Go into the fields believing that God is cruel, and you shall see the weasel and ferret. Go with a sorrowful heart and the woods shall make a deeper gloom. Go rejoicing, and God is everywhere, for there are sermons in stones and there is good in everything.

How true it is that we may hear the wind in the willows—a sad sighing, the echo of our own sorrows; or a *Te Deum* born, not in the tree-tops, but in our own glad heart.

## THE GREAT TEACHER

*June 17*

WILD nature is a teacher.

The great trees bow to the storm—humility.

The squirrel makes many little stores—and there is caution, thrift, and common sense.

The bees are symbols of industry, the ants of citizenship.

The swallows reach their old home by an inner guidance.

The grub becomes the rainbow dragon-fly—‘Ye must be born again.’

The grain of wheat dies, and lives, a prophecy of the eternal resurrection.

## GOING TO BED

*June 18*

LORD, I am going to bed.

Not any fool, Lord, can go rightly to bed. Do Thou help me. When I wash myself, make it a solemn sacrament that it may cleanse the inward man, removing my grievances against Jones, and swilling off my anger against that ridiculous Miss Q. And, as I am so tired, do Thou pitch my weariness through the window and gather up all this day's good under my pillow. Teach me to go to sleep with a lovely thought in my mind, that it may grow in the dark and blossom in the dawn, so that I may get up in the morning with its fragrance everywhere about me.

## ALL THESE

*June 19*

SUNSHINE. White roads. A blue sky. A white cloud. A brilliant sundown. Flowers. A smiling face. A grey spire above red roofs. A bird singing as if all the glory of this day were in its heart. Children playing in the street. People. A dog asleep in the sunshine. Work. Rest. Eating. Reading. Telling somebody something they hadn't heard before. Looking forward to coming home. Laughter. Health. Old slippers. Letters. These are a few of the good things I have seen and heard and felt and done and met with since seven o'clock this morning. How much there is for which we may be thankful!

## A ROBE OF GOOD CHEER

*June 20*

THERE is laughter in the brook; music in the morning wind rustling the green leaves of the trees; a song (a song of praise and gladness) from a lark far above the meadow; a riot of joy in every cottage garden where crimson and gold and green and blue leap up to meet the sun and catch their own fragrance; a sort of deep, calm thankfulness in the pool where the cattle come to drink at sundown; and something humorous about the ducks trooping solemnly across the common. So, at this season of the year, the outdoor world wears a robe of cheerfulness, its sad thoughts hidden under the rich garments of summer.

## MIDSUMMER EVE

*June 21*

A BAD-TEMPERED man who had quarrelled with every one about nothing and was angry with every one except himself, went into the garden, and stood there in the twilight, with the faint afterglow of the sunset mingling with the first silver star-dust. He stood there in the stillness and forgot how time was passing, but felt how small he was, how big the sky above, how vast eternity, how brief a man's life, how great God was, how childish was a quarrelsome man. Then he went indoors to begin a new life.

## THE BEST THINGS

*June 22*

SUPPOSE there were a tax (of say 5s. an hour) on sunshine. Suppose an Act of Parliament limited us to having only twenty flowers free of charge in our garden, levying a shilling on every dozen (or part of a dozen) up to a hundred, and half a crown on all blooms beyond that number. Suppose water were sold at a guinea a gallon, and we had to book our supplies of fresh air in advance. Suppose walking were for Dukes and Earls only, and motor-cars were for any scallywag. Suppose conversation were as expensive as the sending of telegrams.

How easy it is for us to forget that the best things are free, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

## RELATIVITY

*June 23*

PEOPLE talk as if Relativity were a new thing. So indeed it is in Einstein's hands, but there is a simple form of relativity which some of us fail to grasp.

The first day I was in London I asked for the British Museum, and they said I was to go *down* Great Russell Street. The second day they told me to go *up*. Had the Museum moved? Not at all, *but I had*.

Take care to remember as you look at life that you change as well as the things about you.

## ATHENS AND ARGOS

June 24

Down the ages comes this sermon:

One day Aesop was sitting by the road when a man came by and asked, 'What sort of people live in Athens?'

'Tell me where you come from and the sort of people who live there,' said Aesop.

Frowning, the man answered, 'Oh, I come from Argos, and the people are a wretched crowd—liars, thieves, unjust, quarrelsome.'

'I am sorry to tell you,' answered Aesop, 'that you will find the people in Athens like that.'

Presently another man came by and asked a similar question, and when Aesop asked where he came from and what sort of people lived there, he replied, 'Oh, I come from Argos, and the people are all friendly. Honour, truth, virtue, kindness, these are found among them. I love them all.'

Then Aesop smiled and said, 'Friend, I rejoice to tell you that you will find the people in Athens like that.'

And Athens might be Pudsey or Wigan.

## OPEN THE DOOR

June 25

A FRIEND of mine says he abominates all mottoes except one, and this one he keeps ever before him, and loves to use in season. It is: *Fear knocked at the door. Faith opened it, and there was no one there.*

## HANS ANDERSEN

*June 26*

Do you know Hans Andersen's greatest tale? It is called, *What the Old Man Does is Always Right*. The old man did the maddest thing, exchanging a fine cow for a bag of rotten apples, but his wife loved him, and loving him made all the difference. That is natural—it always does.

## LOVERS IN A LANE

*June 27*

SLOWLY they walked up the green lane in that golden twilight which often comes at the end of a June day. (It was impertinent of me to follow them.) They were arm in arm. I think she leaned a little on him. They talked very earnestly in low voices. (It was almost criminal of me to try to catch a word they said.) Once her quiet laughter rang out. They left the cart-track and sat down on a seat under some bushes—and very close together they were. (It was madness of me to be a third party.)

As I passed I raised my hat. 'You seem happy,' I said.

'We *are* happy—Alice and me,' said the man. 'And we've been happy with each other fifty years come Martinmas, and God has been rare and good to us, hasn't he Alice?'

And Alice, smiling radiantly (her lovely face framed by silver hair) said softly, 'Very good, John; very good.'

## FAIRY-TALES

*June 28*

HAVE you noticed how much philosophy is packed  
into the fairy-tales?

Cinderella is a glorious vindication of work—the  
slavey becoming a princess.

Jack the Giant Killer illustrates the truth that  
courage is a fine thing.

Dick Whittington nerves us to great endeavour,  
and bids us aim high.

The Sleeping Beauty is a parable of the Resur-  
rection—we sleep to wake.

Why the Sea is Salt assures us that knavery never  
pays.

The Ugly Duckling teaches us that we must not  
judge by appearances, and that goodness is hidden in  
most unlikely places.

## A CHANCE FOR YOU

*June 29*

WHEN you are wondering what to do next, remember  
that there is still need of willing service and great  
enterprise, for:

The best verse hasn't been rhymed yet,  
The best house hasn't been planned,  
The highest peak hasn't been climbed yet,  
The mightiest rivers aren't spanned;  
Don't worry and fret, faint-hearted,  
The chances have just begun,  
For the best jobs haven't been started,  
The best work hasn't been done.

## JUNE ROSES IN DECEMBER

*June 30*

SOMETIMES I am downhearted because the day has been unkind and things have gone wrong. I become despondent because the present seems unfriendly. It is then I try to look back over the way I have travelled, that I may live again in happier times. I believe:

*God gave his children memory  
That in Life's gardens there might be  
June roses in December.*

I remember past kindnesses; recall the pleasant surprises I have had, the successes and pleasures I have known, and I take courage again, for the past has taught me how to face to-morrow with confidence.

## HALF IS LEFT

*July 1*

HALF the year is gone.

How much of all the wonder have we seen?

How much of the sheer loveliness of this year we must have missed, how often we must have forgotten to wonder at the glory of life—in wood, and field, and lane, in town and city, in garden and slum, in our neighbour's house, and at our own fireside.

Come now, be of good cheer! Only half the year is lost! Awake and see! Catch summer by the hem, see the golden fires of autumn, watch winter's magic, and find riches before the year is done.

## I BELIEVE

*July 2*

WE could all be better than we are.

There is good in the worst of us.

You cannot keep on doing your best without reaping a rich harvest day by day.

Goodness is worth-while.

You cannot get your own back without losing more than you gain.

There is much for which we can all be thankful.

Faith in others always pays.

Life is a great adventure.

Our thoughts shape our deeds, and our deeds determine our destiny.

## THE USES OF ADVERSITY

*July 3*

It is 2,000 years since Aesop gave the world the tale of two frogs which fell into a bowl of cream. 'Oh!' cried the first frog, and straightway sank to the bottom and was drowned. But the second frog (the fable tells us) struck out bravely and churned the cream till he made a pat of butter by which he escaped from the bowl.

And when misfortune comes to you, there are two things you can do. You can lose heart and go down; or you can face up bravely and win. Pray, therefore, not that adversity may pass you by, but that you may have courage and power to turn misfortune into blessing.

## HOW GOD HIMSELF IS FOUND

*July 4*

HERE for these golden days is a verse or two from  
John Keble:

The works of God, above, below,  
Within us and around,  
Are pages in His book, to show  
How God Himself is found.  
The glorious sky embracing all,  
Is like the Maker's love,  
Wherewith encompassed, great and small,  
In peace and order move.  
Thou Who hast given me eyes to see  
And love this sight so fair,  
*Give me a heart to find out Thee,  
And read Thee everywhere.*

## ENEMIES OF FEAR

*July 5*

THERE is the fear of being found out. A confession<sup>ment</sup>  
of the truth, whatever it costs, will slay it.

There is the fear that comes from insecurity.  
Here faith alone can be a rock for us.

There is the fear of old age and poverty. The  
remedy for one is uprightness and beautiful thinking  
in youth; for the other it is industry and *trust*.

There is the fear of self—the inferiority complex.  
We must pray for courage.

There is the fear of death—and the fear of this  
fear is the great promise of immortality.

## IT DID NOT HAPPEN

*July 6*

HERE is the negative good of a plain man's ordinary day:

Did not fall out of bed.  
Not drowned in the bath.  
No bad news by post.  
Wife not ill-tempered.  
Children not in bed with measles.  
Train not missed.  
Not run over at the corner.  
Office not destroyed by earthquake.  
Not dismissed for theft.  
Friend not dead.  
Business down—but not as far as it might be.  
Wife not (yet) run off with a black man.  
Sleep not destroyed by uneasy conscience.

## ORDINARY PEOPLE

*July 7*

For every good man whose name is known there is a host of good men whose names will never be known except to a few. More bad people get into print than good ones. For every drunk and disorderly reported in your local paper there are many sober men; for every bigamist, a great company of men and women making home-life sweet and sacred.

Let us see the unadvertised good in our fellows, their quiet kindnesses, little sacrifices, small heroisms, and all the beauty of their lives.

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## LORD TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

July 8

ABOVE the smoke of Sheffield stands James Montgomery who wrote:

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye  
When none but God is near.  
O Thou by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way!  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;  
*Lord! teach us how to pray.*

## MAKING A LAWN

July 9

I LOOKED at the level strip of velvet lawn. 'It's a wonderful lawn,' I said. 'How long has it taken to make?'

'A good time,' said the owner, smiling.

And I smiled too, for I remembered the story of the American who bought grass seed in Oxford and a hundred tons of English soil, and asked a gardener to go back with him to his 'burg' and make a lawn like those at Oxford.

'With pleasure,' said the gardener, 'but you must give it two centuries to settle down.'

And that was a 'good time'—and dollars would not buy it.

In the main, the best things are grown or made slowly. It is true of lawns and of lives.

## COLOUR

*July 10*

JULY is the month of brilliant colour.

There is the blue sky—blue for hope and love, for fidelity and faith.

There are a thousand shades of green. Green is for gladness and immortality.

The brown earth under the corn is the symbol of tribulation—a tribulation crowned with gladness.

Yellow was the old symbol for wisdom and glory.

Here in the lane is the red campion, and red is for charity.

Justice and royalty are displayed by the purple orchis; and wherever you see a bank of daisies there is purity and innocence.

## GOODNESS AND MERCY

*July 11*

THE Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## PROGRESS

*July 12*

ANAESTHETICS have made surgery painless.

Little boys are not sent up chimneys to-day.

Our castles are ruins.

Education is free.

Books are cheap, and literature can be had even by the poorest.

The expectation of life has been steadily increasing since 1920.

The needs of the worker are not ignored.

Witches are neither burned nor drowned.

Many superstitions have passed away.

Bribery and corruption have gone from political life.

Duelling is practically dead and done with.

## HIKING

*July 13*

'THE worst of it,' said the first Hiker, 'is that we are three miles from the nearest house.'

'The best of it,' said the second Hiker, 'is that we are not twenty-three miles from the nearest house.'

So they plucked up courage and talked pleasantly in the rain, and had a sing-song, and made fun of each other, and though all this did not keep them from getting wet, it made tolerable what might have been much more wretched.

If we can do this sort of thing on short journeys, why not on the long journey of life?

## THE LIGHT WILL COME

*July 14*

HERE are two wise sayings from two wise men. One says: 'It takes God's weather to bring up God's flowers.' It was St. Alexander who said this, and one has only to think a little to see how much is wrapped up in it. It also takes God's plan of life to shape you as He means you to be shaped.

Jean D'Alembert has the other word. It is, 'Go on, and the light will come to you.' You see how it helps out the other word? Go on, even if you cannot see God's plan. Go on. Keep going on, and presently the hidden thing shall be revealed, and you shall see.

## GOOD THINGS

*July 15*

LET us begin this day by thinking of good things, and let us go through this day thinking of them—carrying them with us wherever we go.

Sunshine is pleasant; colours are precious; flowers are emblems of a great love; the sky is a stage for cloud pageants; some people are good; children singing is something to thank God for; at any rate a few husbands and wives are not always quarrelling; all the kind people are not dead; you never know what is round the corner; there is a hidden sunrise in every sundown; we are still moved by poetry, and music, and song, and the wonder of stirring deeds and the glory of fine lives.

Things might be worse, surely?

## LOOKING FOR THE BEST

July 16

I WONDER if when you came to July 15th you were surprised that I went on talking about *Good Things*, and never mentioned St. Swithin?

I did it purposely.

I wanted you to see that my life is too crowded with worth-while things for me to bother with looking up anxiously at the sky to see if the rain is coming. God bless those foolish folk who look for things they do not want.

Come now, let us look on the bright side.

## A PARABLE

July 17

FROM my window I looked into the garden and thought surely some one had dropped a diamond there. It was scintillating, now crimson, now green, now peacock blue, a glorious something lighting up my room.

Out I went, therefore, and behold it was a fragment of a broken bottle.

And near it was a Russian novel I had left lying on the lawn. But that did not shine.

The light which came to the bit of glass was thrown out again; and the light falling on the dull cover of my book was absorbed.

The book was dull (inside and out), the broken glass a glory. So, friend, the sunshine of life is meant to radiate from your face, and the more it shines from you, the brighter your life will be.

## IT IS NOT SO BAD

July 18

TO-DAY I have seen a clerk wearing a button-hole. I have talked with a man who says he is going straight in business at any cost. I have heard of a maiden lady sending twenty children to the seaside. I have been into a house where an invalid was writing a letter to *cheer somebody*. I have talked with a schoolboy who wants to be an adventurer like Drake. I have spoken with a woman who assures me babies are far more important than battleships. I have seen a field of wheat ripening towards harvest. I have passed a man with a fine face. I have felt that this old world is not so bad after all.

## THE MAN HE WAS

July 19

HE died a month or two ago, but a man who is in a fair way of business was talking to me about him this afternoon. 'He was a Christian gentleman,' he said.

'Yes,' I said. 'I believe it.'

'I *know* it,' said he. 'A clerk in his office made a mess of things, and was sent to prison for something indecent. His employer was at the prison gates to meet him when he came out. He was there, smiling, with his hand out, and he said, 'The old place is waiting for a new man, Harry.' That's what he said.' It was a great thing to say. I know, because I was the man he said it to.'

Sleep peacefully, Christian gentleman!

## HEROES

*July 20*

A BOY who was run over the other day and died saying, 'Tell mother gently.'

A woman who sews all the week that her son may learn to be a doctor.

A man who does not believe in sweepstakes, and bears the contempt of his fellow-workers, a modern martyr for principle.

A university student who has had to take a post as a waitress.

A retired man who has set up in business again so as not to be a burden to his son.

A minister who would like to devote all his time to literary work, but puts his calling first.

A man who has recently signed a temperance pledge, and finds passing a public-house almost as hard as passing a boa constrictor.

## THE JUDGE

*July 21*

BE good.

Yes, yes, that is all very well, but how do we know what is good?

Let a little child be the judge. If this thing something you would not care to talk about to child, something you would not have it know or see, something which might harm it, this thing not good. Shun it. Set a child in the midst, and let it be your judge.

## CHEERFULNESS

*July 22*

Do not have a shallow cheerfulness which lasts out through the sunshine and becomes insubstantial in the dark when it is needed most. Have a cheerfulness founded on a faith in God; on a principle of belief that there is good in all men and something of good to be found in everything; on a strong yet humble courage which springs from confidence in yourself because you know you have put your trust in God.

Then you may face the day cheerfully, for you can have nothing to fear.

## TREES

*July 23*

I THINK that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree,  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

And in Portugal I have seen these words near a tree: You who pass by, and would raise your hand against me, hearken ere you hurt me. I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you lie, and the timber that builds your boat. I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the wood of your cradle, and the shell of your coffin. Listen to my prayer, harm me not.

## GOD BE WITH YOU

*July 24*

GOD be with you whose lot it is to walk and not faint; to keep on when you feel like giving in; to do little things and to know there will be no reward; to sacrifice yourself and perform a kindness and know that no one will so much as nod a thank you to you. God be with you who are parents and receive nothing in return for what you have loved to do. God be with you if you are trying to sell brushes at doors that open half an inch and close with a slam; with you who have walked five miles to get a job, and have had to walk five miles (but a longer five, surely) back again without doing anything but wear out shoe leather, pretty thin to start with.

## AND WITH YOU

*July 25*

GOD be with you, brave woman with a lodging-house; you who are making other people's beds and doing other people's washing, and sweeping stairs that other feet have trodden, and doing it all without any hope of ever doing anything else. God be with you, slow brother. What a wonderful fellow John was, and how he took all before him and won his way to the university! And you, dull brother, you plodded on, neither mounting with wings nor running with speed, but just jogging on with a great hunger for a bit of praise in your half-starved heart, and a splendid courage, doing things badly, but doing them as well as you could! God be with you.

## PREACHING AND WALKING

July 26

THE story is told of St. Francis of Assisi that, laying his hand on the shoulder of a young monk, he said, 'My son, let us go into the town and preach.' The venerable father and the young monk set out together, conversing as they went. They wandered down the principal streets until they found themselves back at the monastery again. Then the young monk inquired, 'Father, when shall we begin to preach?' The father, looking kindly upon him, said, 'My child, *we have been preaching*. We were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen, and so we have delivered a morning sermon. Son, it is of no use that we walk to preach unless we preach as we walk.'

## GLORY

July 27

HALF a hundred generations have come and gone since Bede wrote:

A hymn of glory let us sing,  
New songs throughout the world shall ring;  
By a new way none ever trod  
Christ mounteth to the throne of God.

Be thou our present joy, O Lord!  
Who wilt be ever our reward;  
And, as the countless ages flee,  
May all our glory be in thee!

## ELIMINATION

July 28

EVERY schoolboy knows the process of elimination. It is used in Euclid and in algebra, and a very useful process it is.

I think it applies in a very satisfactory manner to worries. Worries have a way of being vague and of appearing more formidable than they are. Brooding over them, they are indefinite and shapeless, and they tend to multiply while we think about them.

Nothing is healthier than sitting down with them, and deliberately taking them one by one and trying to eliminate those which do not count, or count little. It is a hard exercise, but it pays, for it will generally be found that the legion can be reduced by the process of elimination to one or two outstanding worries, and the recognition of this helps us to assess them more accurately and to have a better chance of dealing with them.

## SPORT AND WORK

July 29

LET us remember one thing about holidays, a thing Shakespeare has summed up:

*If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work.*

Those who work hardest best enjoy a holiday. This is as certain as that only those who are tired know how to value rest, and only those who have done their duty to value ease.

## A MIRACLE OF SHARING

*July 30*

THERE was once an old Arab who called his three sons and said, 'My sons, I am about to die. Live in peace. To my eldest son I give half my camels; to my second son I give one-third; and to the youngest I give one-ninth.' Then he died.

Now the old man had seventeen camels, and the three brothers were much perplexed to know how to share them as their father had ordered, and finding it impossible they went to a poor friend of their father. When he heard their trouble he said, 'I have only one camel but I will give it you.' So he gave it them. Then the eldest took his half (nine camels); the second took one-third (six camels); and the youngest one-ninth (two camels); but the wise old man still had his one camel left.

## MR. MEARS

*July 31*

ON ye of little faith, listen to the pathetic story of Mr. Mears, and pray weep not thereat:

There was a man who had a clock,  
His name was Mr. Mears,  
He wound it every single night  
For thirty-seven years,  
But when at last it was found out  
An eight-day clock to be,  
A madder man than Mr. Mears  
You could not wish to see.

And you? To think that God is behind you, and you try to live your little life without Him!

## IN SEARCH OF TROUBLE

*August 1*

THERE was once a foolish monkey who wanted to know what trouble was, so he went to The Wise One, and asked him about it, and The Wise One said, 'Well, if you really want to know, go to the house in the clearing, carry the sack near the door to the middle of a big field, and then open it.'

So the monkey did as he had been told, and when he opened the sack, out sprang a great dog. The monkey ran, and the dog ran after him, and the monkey wished that it had been a little field, but it was a big one; and when at last he reached a tree and was out of harm's way he knew what trouble was.

It was very foolish of him to make trouble for himself. Do you?

## HOLIDAYS

*August 2*

No holiday can be a success without the holiday spirit.

It is the spirit of making the best of everything. If the weather is perfect you enjoy it, if unkind you do not worry. If your car goes over hills and moors, all is well. If it breaks down, the holiday spirit does not break down with it.

But is this merely the holiday spirit—or is it the spirit wise folk bring to all life—the spirit of making the best of everything?

## ON BEING BUSY

*August 3*

THERE is a story (whether true or not I cannot say) of a Leader of the Opposition who once called on the Chancellor of the Exchequer and found him on his knees under the table. 'Well, I've seen . . .' exclaimed the Leader.

'Hush,' whispered the Chancellor, 'it's David's turn to look for me.'

Then David, his grandson, came in and found the Chancellor, and that was the end of the game.

Even important people have to find time to be human now and then.

1914

*August 4*

SOME of us will never forget what happened on this day in 1914.

Let us this day remember those who died with a cheer, and let us remember that for every man and for every woman there is something to do for peace *now*. So far as in us lies we are to live at peace with all men—and it is not an easy thing, but one of the hardest things in the world. To live at peace with all men (including our neighbours) means graciousness of spirit, willing self-sacrifice, nobility of ideal, and the breaking down of prejudice.

Governments and leagues cannot prevent a repetition of the horrors of 1914. It depends on you and me.

## THE WALLS OF SPARTA

*August 5*

AN ambassador to Sparta had important business there, and Agesilaus, the King, showed him his proud capital. The ambassador was greatly impressed, but one thing astonished him; there were no walls. 'How is this?' he asked, marvelling that the city should be without defences.

'You cannot have observed carefully,' said the King, 'or you would have seen them. To-morrow I will show them to you.'

The next day they went to a wide plain outside the city, and there the ambassador beheld an army in battle array. 'Behold the *walls* of Sparta,' said Agesilaus. 'Ten thousand men—and *every man a brick*.'

## BE PREPARED

*August 6*

THERE were seven or eight entertainers on the beach at a little seaside resort. They gave a third-rate show to a handful of people. One day the comedian failed to raise a laugh. His jokes went flat. As he went off the stage a man in a deck-chair waylaid him and gripped his hand. He knew (what none of the audience knew) that the comedian's wife was dying of cancer.

Often life is harder than we think. Be prepared with a bit of sympathy; it is frequently needed in unlikely places.

## THE STILL SMALL VOICE

August 7

AND behold a great and strong wind rent the mountains; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire *a still small voice*; and when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went and stood in the entering-in of the cave.

To the old prophet (Elijah, the man of action) came the word, *Be still*. It comes to us also.

You who are troubled and despairing, tired out; you who go rushing about; whose minds are harassed with problems, whose days are full of sound and fury signifying nothing, *be still*.

## THE DIFFICULT THING

August 8

SHE said it was six years since it occurred. He *knew* it was seven. They argued. He said more than he had intended. She left the room. The house was filled with intolerable silence. Each had some cause for complaint. Both knew the matter was too trivial to quarrel over.

And at last the man went upstairs and found his wife weeping, and said, 'I am sorry. Forgive me.' She forgave him (knowing he had forgiven her). Blessed is he that has courage and grace to take the first step towards closing the breach he has helped to make.

## POCKET PHILOSOPHY

*August 9*

THE ticket-collector asked for my ticket. I could not find it. 'Bless me,' I said, 'surely I haven't lost it?' He eyed me suspiciously as I felt first in one pocket and then in another. I found it eventually, but not until I had made another discovery, namely, that I had seventeen pockets.

When I reached home I turned out their contents and was amazed at the wealth I had—among other things, a dozen postage stamps, a blue pencil, a key I thought I had lost, and a ten-shilling note.

How true it is that often we are richer than we know, and that only when necessity arises do we realize how many resources and what wealth is at our command.

## THE PADRE

*August 10*

A HOLIDAY camp, tents in a field near the North Sea, bathing costumes on a fence, the smell of clover, a blaze of poppies, a cooking-stove, cricket bats in a heap, shorts and shirts, bronzed faces, youth, vigour, about twenty young fellows in a circle on the grass near the cliff-top, and all eyes fixed on the padre (a young fellow on a case of lemonade empties), and as he sits there he talks quietly of the great adventure—the Christian life. It is a holiday with holiness.

## OVERCOMING

*August 11*

A CHILD and I crossed a field and came to a small stile, and the child climbed over with much ado, but I vaulted lightly over it. The stile was a great obstacle to the child. It was scarcely anything to me.

Many people refuse to grow up in the mental and spiritual sense. They remain dwarfs, and a small misunderstanding, a little annoyance or defeat appears vast to them. They cannot get over it. They are like the pitiable churchman who washed his hands of Christianity because he found a stranger in his pew one Sunday morning.

Lord, make us broad-minded and generous-hearted that we may be giants in faith and works, striding through life with majestic step, and utterly ignoring these trivial set-backs. Teach us to overcome by submission of self to Thee.

## THOUGHTS

*August 12*

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY said we are never alone when accompanied by noble thoughts.

When you are alone guard your thoughts that you may act freely in company.

Great thoughts need no trumpet.

Said DESCARTES: I think, therefore I am.

Think the best. Then do it.

Think, and thank God.

## GOD MADE IT ALL

*August 13*

THE world and life's too big to pass for a dream.  
You've seen the world,  
The beauty, and the wonder, and the power,  
The shape of things, their colours, lights and shades,  
Changes, surprises—and God made it all.  
For what? Do you feel thankful, aye or no,  
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,  
The mountains round it, and the sky above,  
Much more the figures of man, woman, and child.  
These are the frame to?

*This world's no blot for us,  
Nor blank. It means intensely, and it means good.*

## THE OTHERS

*August 14*

LET us remember:

Railway porters tugging with heavy luggage when  
the weather is hot.

People living in narrow streets, their houses  
unbearably close, their attics too hot for sleep.

Housemaids in sculleries, waitresses almost 'run on  
their feet'.

Landladies who live at the seaside and never see  
the sea.

Invalids who cannot find a cool place in bed.

Let us remember these. Understanding what life  
is for them this month will not make us less happy,  
but it will make our happiness more precious.

## THE YOUNGER GENERATION

*August 15*

I AM amazed at the young men and women—apparently careless, shallow, sport-loving, unthinking—who are ready to talk seriously about themselves, about God, and about their quest for an ideal. They do it unconventionally. When I think of the type of manhood and womanhood I have found among holiday associations; among members of Toc H; Scouts and Guides; the Oxford Group; and among young fellows who talk about football; and girls who talk about fashions and men, I begin to think that we are living in an age with a new sort of religion, a sort of direct, personal, vigorous religion full of new and splendid vitality.

## THE VERY RICH MAN

*August 16*

He is elderly and frail. Part of his house is sub-let. There is no garden. Once he had a good income, but his investments have depreciated. He told me he was a rich man.

'You see,' he said, 'all my life I have been learning how to change my liabilities into assets, my losses into gains. Every evil that comes to me I take as from the hands of God, saying, "Lord, I thank Thee for this blessing in disguise." Then I set to work to look into it, to change or use it, and bit by bit the misfortune becomes good fortune.'

## UTOPIA

*August 17*

PLATO and More dreamed of Utopias. You (who are more fortunate) can see one any day you wish. All you have to do is to go to the seaside this morning and there is Utopia where men and women do not try to rob each other; where business and getting rich is not the order of the day; where children are happy and there are no slums; where the old conventions are forgotten, and class distinctions must perforce, be done away since a bank manager and a dustman look much the same in bathing costumes.

Here, then, is the ideal state, with men living nearly in one brotherhood as perhaps they ever will.

What a pity that suspicions and sophistications are put on with our clothes. Cannot we take the seaside to our suburban residences and our business premises?

## CORONATION TIME

*August 18*

THIS is the coronation of the year, the crowning of that co-operation between man and God which brings forth the harvest and sets the sheaves in long rows in the broad fields. This harvest season is a lesson for us all, that gladness and security come to us by brotherhood among ourselves and faithful busy sonship with God.

## HARVEST

*August 19*

THE day is before you, your hands are empty. What will you bring home at sunset?

Are you going out this new day to look for the best, to catch smiles and store up bits of good news, and gather riches of the spirit, and keep an eye for lovely things, and an ear for inspiring words? Are you going to harvest a little of the world's daily crop of goodness? Then you will bring home a sheaf of good corn. Bread is made of such corn, the very bread of Life.

Seek, and ye shall find. Let your harvest be good grain.

## LESS OR MORE

*August 20*

Now there was a wise man who had three books of magic, and he went to the king and offered to sell the three at so much. But the king said he could not afford so great a sum.

So the wise man went away and burned one of the books, came back, and offered two to the king at the price he had asked for three, and the king said, 'Go away.'

So he went away, and having burned another of his magic books he came back and offered the one that was left at the price of the three, and the king, perceiving its worth, bought it gladly.

Life is like this. When we are young we think we have so many days that one is worth little, but when we are old a day is precious indeed.

## LOVING THEM

*August 21*

DEAR MOTHER,

The easy thing to do with naughty children is to be cross with them, to speak sharply, to shake them, to be ill-tempered, to preach at them, to make them frightened. When they are wrong-side-out and you are tired out, there is no wonder you are at your wit's end.

But the brave thing to do, the thing that is hard but always worth-while, is to try to love them into better ways, patiently and gently to guide them into the right path. It is a disappointing method sometimes. It is almost always difficult. But it is the only way to make them what you want them to be. Take courage, and believe that though this seems a slow way, it is best.

## HOME AGAIN

*August 22*

ONE of the best things about going away on holiday is that you have to come home again. It is worth leaving home to have the joy of coming back, to see the old, familiar things in a new light, to feel a touch of sentiment catch your heart when you see the arm-chair and the lawn-mower, and find your neighbour has taken a pint of milk for you, and that she seems pleased you are back. It is almost the best part of the holiday.

## SPURGEON'S SUNSET

*August 23*

I WATCHED a glorious sunset, marvelling at the beauty wherewith the evening sky was ablaze. The next evening I resorted to the same spot, hoping to be enraptured with the gorgeous pomp of ending day, but there were no clouds and therefore no glories. The canopy of sapphire was there, but no magnificent array of clouds to form golden masses of burning crimson, conflagrations of splendour, flashing peaks of mountains of fire. The sun was as bright, but for lack of clouds on which to pour out his lustre, his magnificence was unrevealed. A man who should live and die without trials would be like a setting sun without clouds.'

## WORDSWORTH'S SUNSET

*August 24*

'AND I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.'

## THE GREAT TASK

*August 25*

PERHAPS you have heard that story of the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, and of how a visitor asked one of the workmen what he was doing. 'Cutting stone,' he replied without looking up.

'And what are *you* doing?' the visitor asked, addressing another workman.

He answered he was earning so many shillings a week.

'And you?'

The third stayed his hand, and looking up said, 'Sir, I am helping to build a cathedral!'

## THE WORLD'S WISDOM

*August 26*

FROM INDIA: To conquer oneself is a greater feat than conquering others.

AN ARABIC PROVERB: Trust in God, yet tie to camel's leg.

FROM GREECE: Love refuseth no labour.

FROM SPAIN: He loves thee well who makes thee weep.

FROM ITALY: Begin. To begin is half the work.

FROM U.S.A. (Abraham Lincoln): Let us have faith, and dare to do our duty as we understand it.

FROM PERSIA: How shall the diver obtain pearls if he fear the sharks?

A GERMAN PROVERB: There is much beauty about us.

FROM FRANCE: The tree conquers by bowing to the storm.

## BARRIE SPEAKS

*August 27*

HERE is wisdom from Sir J. M. Barrie:

To die would be an awfully big adventure.

Whenever a child says, 'I don't believe in fairies,' there's a little fairy somewhere that falls right down dead.

Life is a long lesson in humility.

A spirited old lady may be the prettiest sight in the world.

It is not true that woman was made from man's rib; she was made from his funny-bone.

We should thank our Creator three times daily for courage. This courage is a proof of our immortality. Pray for it. Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered. *Be not merely courageous, but light-hearted and gay.*

## DOUBTS

*August 28*

NEVER be afraid of doubting. It is the first step to knowing. If religion puzzles you, if there are some things about it you cannot be quite sure about and do not understand, do not pretend to understand them. A man who says Jesus Christ rose from the dead, but cannot believe it will never enter the Kingdom; but one who honestly doubts it and as honestly tries to believe this stupendous thing, he it is who may get into the Kingdom, if only by the skin of his teeth.

For to doubt means to think, and to think means to approach the very heart of things.

## ADVENTURERS ALL

*August 29*

LET us have the adventurer's spirit! For him the very roughness of the road, the very dangers of the way make up the glory of the enterprise. Poor weaklings sigh for a smooth path, but the men and women with the adventurer's courageous spirit know that the true joy of living is most often found in the heat of the day.

Let no man think God will at all times send an angel to clear his path. That is not angels' work, but men's!

If we believe this and act in accordance with our belief, we cannot fail to make a success of life. Even defeat will be triumph.

## WEALTH OF INDIES

*August 30*

THE Spaniards have a proverb worth remembering. They say, 'He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.'

No traveller in foreign countries can hope to find romance or wonder unless he has some knowledge of the history, traditions, and character of the people he is visiting.

It is so in life. We cannot find beauty unless we ourselves have an appreciation of it, we cannot find good in the world unless we do good, and the only happiness we shall ever find will be the joy of our own heart when we know we have made happiness for others.

## TWO WORDS

*August 31*

FROM A POET:

Noble souls through dust and heat,  
Rise from disaster and defeat  
The stronger.

FROM A PREACHER:

As sure as ever God puts His children in the  
furnace, He will be in the furnace with them.

## HOW MAGDALEN WENT IN

*September 1*

MAGDALEN at Michael's gate

Tirled at the pin;

On Joseph's thorn sang the blackbird,

Let her in! Let her in!

Hast thou seen the wounds?' said Michael,

'Knowest thou thy sin?'

It is evening, evening, sang the blackbird,

Let her in! Let her in!

Thou bringest no offerings,' said Michael,

'Nought save sin,'

And the blackbird sang, She is sorry, sorry, sorry,

Let her in! Let her in!

When he had sung himself to sleep,

And night did begin,

She came and opened Michael's Gate,

And Magdalen went in.

## THE LITTLE MAN

*September 2*

I DID not think much of him. He was a little man, insignificant, mild of eye, round-shouldered, pale. I glanced at him as we passed, and I hardly noticed him.

Then my friend nudged me. 'That's Smith,' he said. 'You know . . . Smith?'

I shook my head.

'You don't know? Well, he went out to India, was a medical missionary for years, ruined his health, buried his wife, and came home to live with an invalid sister. That's Smith!'

And that's common heroism. Think what it means.

## FOR AND AGAINST

*September 3*

IF I am biased against any one it is very hard for them to make a good impression on me. Once let me think ill of a man, and everything he does I interpret unfavourably. For that man, it is desperately hard to show me his best.

On the contrary, the people I love I am at once willing to make allowances for, to believe that when they said that cutting thing it was only their humour; that when they left me in the lurch it was simply through ignorance. It is hard for them to appear my enemies.

God help us all to go with others rather than against them, that the best in them may find it easy to reveal itself.

## HERE AND HEREAFTER

*September 4*

FROM the *Pilgrim's Progress*:

HE that is down needs fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride;  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,  
Little be it or much;  
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is  
That go on pilgrimage;  
Here little, and hereafter bliss,  
Is best from age to age.

## THE BEST

*September 5*

CHIEF among all the arts is the art of making the best of things. Blessed is the woman who would like a modern house and knows how to be happy in a Victorian one with cellar kitchens and an old cooking-range. Blessed is the man who has visions of foreign travel and goes out bravely and cheerfully to sell potatoes. Blessed are those who have reason to expect much of life and have received little; blessed, I say, if only they can make the best of what might have been better, bringing a rare spirit to the common round.

## SUNDIALS

*September 6*

I COUNT only the sunny hours.  
I mark time. Dost thou?  
Now—or when?  
Begone about your business.  
So passeth the glory of the world.  
Use to-day.  
Be up and doing.  
Traveller, it is later than you think.  
Time is more precious than gold.  
Every hour shortens life.  
Take time.  
To-morrow will not come.  
It is time.  
Do it now.  
Watch and pray.

## HOW TO BE HAPPY

*September 7*

HE never practised what he preached, but Mr. Micawber's financial advice is worth noting:

'My other piece of advice, Copperfield,' said Mr. Micawber, 'you know. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen, nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery. The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the God of Day goes down upon the dreary scene, and—and, in short, you are for ever floored!'

## TO SOME ONE SUFFERING

*September 8*

[ERE is comfort from a great evening hymn:

At even, ere the sun was set,  
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;  
O in what divers pain they met!  
O with what joy they went away!

Thy touch has still its ancient power;  
No word from Thee can fruitless fall,  
Hear in this solemn evening hour,  
And in Thy mercy heal us all.

## THEY ALSO SERVE

*September 9*

WHEN I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more  
bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest He returning chide,  
'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
*They also serve who only stand and wait.'*

## A WORD FROM WILLIAM BYRD

*September 10*

WILLIAM BYRD lived in Shakespeare's day, and word of his is treasured still. He says:

He that one sin in conscience keeps  
When he to quiet goes,  
More venturous is than he that sleeps  
With twenty mortal foes.

And St. Paul says: 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'

## THE END OF THE DAY

*September 11*

WELL, I have come to the end of the day. There has been much to thank God for. With a blue sky and sunshine; with all the freshness of the morning all the glory of a splendid sunset, it has been a day of wonder. And I have found much good in it.

Not every day is like this. I do not think I would have them all like this. Days of disappointment—sometimes of bitterness—come my way; and often everything seems to go wrong . . . rain, cold, misunderstandings, annoyances, things to grieve and sadden me.

But to-day has been different, and I can go to bed content. Shall I not store up the beauty of to-day to put over against the ugliness I may find to-morrow?

When the best comes I must treasure it for future use, so that my dark day may have some light from a sunny day gone by.

## YOUR HANDS

*September 12*

LET them not forget how to pray, neither let them be idle.

Be not ashamed of rough hands, they are consecrated by the work they do.

God looks at pure hands, not full hands.

Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth.

When words fail, put all your love and sympathy and understanding and comfort into a warm, firm, sincere hand-grip.

Let the work of your hands be a joy.

Let your hands be daily sermons about One who had the marks of cruel nails in His hands, and was glorified thereby.

## YOUR FEET

*September 13*

MAY they be swift to serve.

Be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.

O, unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither, to travel is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

The life of Jesus is a lamp unto your feet.

It is not your feet that take you into dangerous places, but your thoughts.

Pray God to guide your feet into the way of understanding.

Stand up as a man.

## YOUR FACE

*September 14*

IF melancholy, it is other people's misfortune.

What you are is plainly written in your face.

Think kind things long enough, and however secret, they will be read by others who see your face.

Of Moses it was said that when he came down from the mountain where he had been with God he wist not that his face shone.

Cervantes writes of one whose face was a benediction. What of yours?

Turn your face to the enemy.

The plainest face is beautiful if gentle, gallant thoughts are behind it.

## YOUR TONGUE

*September 15*

THE stroke of your tongue can break bones. As Ecclesiasticus has it, Many have fallen by the sword, but not so many as by the tongue.

If it is a minister for slander, back-biting, evil-speaking, cut it out. Let it be used for thanking, praising, encouraging, pleasant conversation, the speaking of good news, the telling forth of lovely thoughts.

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

When a word sticks at the tip of your tongue swallow it.

## YOUR THOUGHTS

*September 16*

LET them be open to His sight.

Consider that unkind or impure thoughts, envy, suspicion, melancholy, these are poisons which (as medical knowledge has recently proved) directly affect your health adversely. But this is the least harm they do, for they are the breeding-ground of mental and spiritual diseases.

As you think in your heart, so are you.

Think the best and you will find the best. Find the best and you will do your best. Do your best, and you are at your best.

You cannot be higher than your thoughts. They shape your life.

## YOURSELF

*September 17*

WHERE are you?

Are you your body? Once every seven years or so your body undergoes a complete change. To-day there is not a particle of the *you* there was, say, ten years ago. Are you your brain? That, too, has changed. Yet you remember what happened twenty years ago.

The physical is the temple wherein you dwell. No man has ever seen you, for you are hidden away somewhere. You are soul or spirit or the essence of divinity. This (whatever you call it) is the essential, living, thinking, willing, vital *you*—God in man.

## HEAVEN

September 18

RETURNING from Newfoundland in 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert chose to sail in his smallest ship, a frigate of only ten tons. This he did in order to reassure his men. One of his three ships was lost, and during the fierceness of the gale, as Master Edward Hayes tells us, the General was seen by those on the other vessel sitting abaft with a booby in his hand. And he cried out as often as they approached within hearing, *'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land.'*

These were the last words he was heard to speak.

## DREYFUS

September 19

TO-DAY in 1899 was signed the order of release for Alfred Dreyfus, the innocent Frenchman who for four years was in exile. No man ever suffered more for something he had never done. Degraded, despised, the victim of a dastardly plot which wrecked his life, he bore all bravely, and even in prison he thought, not of himself, but of his wife. He wrote 'An immense sentiment of wonder rose in me at your courage. If it is true that great misfortunes are the touchstones of noble souls, then, oh my darling, yours is one of the most beautiful and noble souls of which it is possible to dream.'

## THE SUN AND THE WIND

*September 20* ✓

HERE is one of the oldest stories in the world. It is worth telling again:

Once upon a time the sun and the wind had a quarrel, and the wind said, 'I'm stronger than you.'

'Then prove it,' said the sun, smiling.

'Very well,' the wind replied boisterously. 'Let us see which of us can make that man take his coat off.' Then the wind blew hard, but all his blowing could not drag the coat away.

'Now,' said the sun gently, 'let me try.' So he beamed, and first the man said, 'How hot it is!' Then he unbuttoned his coat. Then he threw it open, and at last, off came the coat.

Frown at a man, and you chill the best in him, nipping it in the bud. Smile at him, trust him, let him feel the genial atmosphere of your presence, and the best in him will flower.

## THE ASTONISHING THING

*September 21*

I HAVE had a letter to-day from Pauline, who writes to say: 'My Daddy says I may write with a pen as I am seven, and I will not make blots. I want to tell you that every one is very nice to me.'

And Pauline's father adds, 'It is not necessary to say that Pauline is very nice to every one.'

## WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

*September 22*

DEAR FRIEND,

Things *will* go wrong sometimes! I know it, for they have often gone wrong with me. I have built and I have seen the work of my hands come crashing down. I have trudged along the road of bitter disappointment. I have been misunderstood. But we must make the best of it. We must go on hoping and trusting; putting our best into all we do. If we lose, yet do not lose heart, we triumph! Do not pray God to make the rough places plain. Pray for strength to bear life's burdens and grace to keep on. When things go wrong God puts them right—*through you!*

## AN EVENING PRAYER

*September 23*

AT the end of the day, be this your prayer:

Drop Thy still dews of quietness  
Till all my strivings cease;  
Take from my soul the strain and stress,  
And let my ordered life confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of my desire,  
Thy coolness and Thy balm:  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!

## TRAVELLERS

*September 24*

Good company in a journey makes the way seem shorter, says Izaak Walton.

We are all pilgrims, and we should all keep our eyes on the Delectable Mountains.

Stephen Crellett spoke for us all when he said: 'I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.'

The Good Samaritan was a traveller.

Let your spirit be always sensitive that, unlike the men on the road to Emmaus, you may at once perceive the hidden glory of One who shall walk with you.

## JOURNEY'S END

*September 25*

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

'Yes, to the very end.'

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

'From morn to night, my friend.'

But is there for the night a resting-place?

'A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.'

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

'You cannot miss that inn.'

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

'Of labour you shall find the sum.'

Will there be beds for me, and all who seek?

'Yes, beds for all who come.'

## ANOTHER MAN

*September 26*

THE tramp stopped me on the highroad. 'Excuse me, sir,' said he, 'I know I've no business to stop you, and if I'm caught begging I'll be a guest of His Majesty for a bit, and I guess I'm not exactly the Prince of Wales to look at, but poverty don't help to make a man look handsome, and there's no use denying I didn't live straight, sir, and I've paid the penalty to the full, but, by heaven, sir, *you don't know the man I meant to be. . . .*'

I helped him on his way.

## OUR DAILY BREAD

*September 27*

THE farmer ploughed the soil, and the seed was sown in the kindly earth which lay heavy on it, and buried it in a tomb so that it died. By its dying the seed sent a root down and a little blade upwards to meet the sun. So the miracle of growth began. Then came the rain from the heaven. The sunshine smiled encouragement, and silently and wonderfully the stalk grew and the ear filled and the wheat ripened till the plain was bronze in the sun. The ingathering of the crop was followed by the thrashing of the wheat, and presently the miller ground the grain to white flour full of sunshine and rain and strength and patience, and the flour became bread.

Father, give us this day our daily bread, and make us truly thankful.

## WRONG IDEAS

*September 28*

ONLY cowards and stupid people cling to wrong ideas when they know they are wrong. Having decided a thing or committed themselves to a policy they have not the courage to change their minds. They think it beneath them to be convinced, and they seem to think it laudable to stick to their guns even when there is no powder and shot. No man ever yet lost anything by owning himself to be wrong—and it is the first step to being right.

## GETTING IT RIGHT

*September 29*

WHenever any one is anxious to pass on to me a piece of gossip or a fragment of scandal, I invariably ask them if they are sure of their facts. 'Are you sure it's true?' I say; and sometimes, when they look at me in surprise, I venture to tell them this story: A business man met another man who said, 'I hear your brother has just made a cool three thousand in a wholesale deal at Nottingham.'

'I'm afraid you haven't got it quite right,' said the other. 'It was not at Nottingham, it was at Leicester. It was not wholesale, it was retail. It wasn't three thousand pounds, it was thirty thousand pounds. He didn't make it, he lost it. And it wasn't my brother, it was me.'

Isn't it wonderful what gossip can do with the truth?

## LAST THINGS

*September 30*

THIS is the last day of the month.

There is something solemn about a last day. It is a solemn thing to come to the last day at school, to our last day at home before beginning a home of our own, to come to the last day of life.

Often last things are not only solemn—they are shadowed with regrets. We curse the office for years, and then when the lid of the desk is put down for the last time, we realize with a pang that all the time we have been grouching we have been happier than we ever knew.

God help us all to realize the worth of life from time to time.

## FIRST THINGS

*October 1*

THIS is the first day of the month.

Wonderful things are first times. Do you remember the first time you whistled? Glorious it is to do things for the first time—to go to school, to begin work, to see *her* and feel your heart beat faster, to paint your first picture, or make your first speech. Wonderful!

Then the wonder and the glory fade.

Wretched indeed are the people who have lost the spirit of first things—the spirit of wonder and of quick eagerness and intense joy. Pray that at the last you may have the youthful spirit you had at the first.

## TO A LITTLE SERVANT GIRL

*October 2*

DEAR Princess of the Scullery, Sweet Cinderella, be patient. Of course, life is hard sometimes. It is for you and it is hard for me, but we have to hope, and pray, and work for something better. You do a noble work, my dear. If you clean the inside as well as the outside of the pan-lids; if you go down on your knees singing; if, when unjustly treated, you keep back the rebellious passion; if you serve to the point of sacrifice because of that mother of yours at home, noble Joan of Arc of the twentieth century, great is your reward, and happy are you. Do your duty bravely, and be happy.

## THE HEROINE

*October 3*

'I HAVE a little shop,' she wrote, 'and before it pays me it has to provide for my mother and father; for my sisters; and for other dependants. I make it do it by working sixteen hours every day, and I have been at it over twelve years.'

God be with her, and with all the men and women who, like this heroine, are facing life courageously. How many there are not one of us knows. We should sometimes give them a bit of encouragement. A kind word, a cheering look, an understanding nod, these little things may come as a Godsend to men and women who are ready to give in, but somehow keep bravely on.

## FINDING FAULT

*October 4*

SOME people seem to think themselves remarkably intelligent because they can find fault. They call it a development of the critical faculty, but usually it is a sour spirit in a cracked vessel. Bless you, you can find fault without having had a university training, and as a general rule it is true that those who find most wrong with other people have least right in themselves.

Was it not Mark Twain who said: 'It is easy to find fault if one has the disposition. There was once a man who, not being able to find any other fault with his coal, complained that there were too many prehistoric toads in it.'

It is dangerous finding faults unless you know how to put them right.

## WHATEVER IS

*October 5*

POPE has long been dead, but he may stand among the modern philosophers. Consider this masterly summary of the laws of life:

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;  
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;  
All discord, harmony not understood;  
All partial evil, universal good.  
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.

## THE GLORY OF THE COMMON DAY

October 6

No day can be common if redeemed by a high  
resolve in trivial things:

New mercies each returning day  
Hover around us while we pray:  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.  
If on our daily course our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still of countless price  
God will provide for sacrifice.  
*The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.*

## THREADS OF GOLD

October 7

I OFTEN pray for strength to achieve some great  
good, but more often for grace and patience that I  
may do little things magnificently.

As Farrar reminds us:

‘Little self-denials, little honesties, little passing  
words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness,  
little silent victories over favourite temptations—  
these are the threads of gold which, when woven  
together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of  
life that God approves.’

## AMAZING PEOPLE

*October 8*

THERE are two kinds of amazing people, those who do great things with as much ease as if they were little things—capturing cities as you might win the game of dominoes; and those who do little things in a great way.

I prefer the latter, and they are the more amazing. To pare potatoes, cook a meal, make a bed, mend a leak, sweep a road, rule a ledger, all with nobility of purpose, this is to be an Alexander of the commonplace.

## AMAZING THINGS

*October 9*

THEY happen every day. The sun comes up. The laws of the universe never fail. From the emptiness of sleep we are resurrected to the fullness of life. A child comes to earth, trailing clouds of glory. An old man gives some one his blessing and departs with a shining face and an unshakable faith. A coward becomes a hero in the twinkling of an eye. A frail widow gets up to do another day's stitching for a few shillings. A young man meets a girl and a new wonder and a new romance are born in this old world. Some one somewhere starts again after having made a poor thing of the old life. A hard man swallows his pride, and forgives. A poem is written, a piece of music captured, a book finished, a loving service begun.

Amazing things are these—and they happen every day.

## THE CROOKED WINDOW

*October 10*

A MAN once complained because whenever he looked through his window he saw ugly trees, and men and women sadly bent. 'Alas,' said he, 'all the world's awry. How sad it is. How sad.' Thus he bemoaned the imperfections of others.

One day a great wind arose and beat upon his house till it shook, and suddenly a gust stronger than the rest blew his window in with a great shattering of glass. And when the evening was come he stood by the window (which had now no glass) and saw lovely trees across the way, and upright men and women passing by.

Then he fell upon his knees, thanking God for the storm which had given him a new, fair world. But the loveliness had been there all the time.

## BE PREPARED

*October 11*

LET Bryant speak to-day:

So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan which moves  
To that mysterious realm where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry slave, at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and  
soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

## HIGHER MATHEMATICS

*October 12*

SUBTRACT the sin which doth so easily beset you.

Add the whole armour of God that you may run your course with patience.

Multiply your happiness by dividing it.

Let your faith be constant, your love infinite, your self-esteem 0.

Believe that your strength shall be equal to the weight of the burden, and that the sum of the world's ills is always less than God's goodness.

Like your mathematics, let your purpose be pure, and let your preaching be applied. Be sure your direction is right, and in dealing with your fellows use a formula in which an allowance is made for aberration. Consider that a body falls with increased velocity, and bear in mind that we all tend to go off at a tangent unless concentrated on a great ideal.

This do, and the sum will come right.

## A GREAT THING

*October 13*

Is it so small a thing

To have enjoyed the sun,

To have lived light in the spring,

To have loved, to have thought, to have done;

To have advanced true friends, and beat down  
baffling foes?

## THE IMMUTABLE

October 14

THERE are some things in life which are unalterable. 't is well to remember this. Many of us waste our energies trying to change the immutable.

This woman will not accept the inevitable and natural encroachment of age. This man will not realize his limitations, conform to circumstances, comply with the relentless laws of life.

How much happier and more useful they would be if they recognized that some things cannot be altered. They might live to some purpose then, and grow old graciously, or try to make good use of second-rate talents. There would be something fine about their lives then.

## WHAT IS IT TO YOU?

October 15

FROM OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES:

'I will thank you for the sugar,' I said. 'Man is a dependent creature.'

'It is a small favour to ask,' said the divinity student, and passed the sugar.

'Life is a great bundle of little things,' I said. 'Perhaps to you it is a little bundle of great things?'

The divinity student started a laugh, but suddenly reined it back with a pull. '*Life is a great bundle of great things,*' he said.

## A MODERN MICAWBER

*October 16*

'Out of debt, out of danger,' said I, paying a bill to-day. But no man, however punctilious in his payment is ever out of debt!

For consider how much I owe that I can never repay—to my mother, for example. How much I owe to my friends for the enrichment they have brought to my life. Shall I ever be able to repay the debt I owe my old schoolmaster? Am I not increasingly in debt to the writers and thinkers, the poets and inventors of the world, and to those ordinary men and women who live decent lives and do their work that I may benefit therefrom?

Behold in me, therefore, a modern Micawber for ever indebted to the present and the past—but cheerful withal.

## DOING

*October 17*

SINGING, smiling, laughing, cheering, encouraging, bearing, believing, sowing, waiting, trying, aspiring, serving, giving, helping, loving, working, persevering, striving, growing, thinking, beginning, enduring, praising, practising, perfecting, learning, guiding, rejoicing, remembering, following, consecrating, listening, forgiving, hoping, sharing, expecting, building, asking. . . . these are some of the great things to be doing.

## AUTUMN

*October 18*

TREES like Indian princes, splendid and majestic with their crimson and gold apparel; harvested fields brown in the pale sunshine; woods full of fading magnificence; meadows of silence; ripe fruits in the orchards; gathering clouds at sunset, peace, satisfaction, content, beauty, all these I find in the glory of autumn, a time that speaks to me of life.

The silences of these late months are fashioning a glad *Te Deum* for the morning of the year. New life for old is nature's law. Perhaps our passing is the same, a step from autumn into spring?

## CARRYING ON

*October 19*

CARRY on, brother, carry on!

It is hard. Your burden is heavier than mine, and that seems unfair—but grouching will not make it lighter. Yours is a rough road with bad weather and a wind in your face, and I have all sunshine on a broad highway. Well, who knows but what your way is the more inspiring?

There is a hill before us, brother. I shall be over mine by this time to-morrow, while you will be trudging on for many a weary day and night. But, brother, will you not have a more spacious view?

Carry on, brother, carry on!

## BIG BUSINESS

October 20

A YEAR or two ago *Punch* had a delightful article about an ambitious gentleman with unbounded faith in himself whose visiting card informed people that he built railways and developed photographs.

He had the spirit of a Hannibal though he was an ordinary little man. Some of us are lacking in this spirit. We are afraid of big business. We try to do small things—and they need doing; but it is grand to have a magnificent ideal.

Does it seem ridiculous to you that Smith, a grocer, should dream of bringing about a world brotherhood? Was it not a carpenter of Nazareth who dreamed of bringing the whole world into the Kingdom of Heaven? Was that madness, or was it something sublime?

It is often by attempting apparently impossible feats that a little good is accomplished.

## GROW

October 21

HERE is Oliver Wendell Holmes reminding us of the spaciousness of life:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting  
sea!

## FOLK

*October 22*

LORD, make old folk tolerant,  
Young folk sympathetic,  
Great folk humble,  
Busy folk patient,  
Poor folk thankful,  
Rich folk understanding,  
Strong folk gentle,  
Weak folk prayerful,  
Religious folk lovable,  
Gay folk thoughtful,  
Clever folk kindly,  
Bad folk good,  
Good folk pleasant,  
(And make me what I ought to be).  
Amen.

## FOR ALL THESE

*October 23*

FOR the men who take their wages home; for the wives who spend wisely; for fathers who have time to talk to their children; for mothers who love their little ones into gentle ways; for the young man who is trying to be worthy of the girl; for the girl who means to make him a good wife; for landladies who are honest in hard times; for sober men who are good citizens; for those who suffer without complaining; for fairly clever people who do their best; for all these thank God. Without them life must be infinitely poor, and the world a much less pleasant place.

## SEEING

*October 24*

FROM my upper window I could see in next door, a small garden with a high wall. There was a small boy crying for his mother. In the window I saw her when she was a distance and knew she would open the heavens with the child in a moment. *But* he cried when she was twenty yards away, when there was five yards away, when there was separating them. He could not see.

But I could see over the wall higher. So faith raises us above reason farther—and are comforted.

## BELIEVING

*October 25*

CONSIDER what faith is. It is:

An outward and visible sign of spiritual grace.

The substance of things hoped for of things not seen.

A higher faculty than reason.

Believing where we cannot prove.

A door to a more spacious room.

An argument based on the logic of faith.

Banking on the Almighty.

Doing all you can—and leaving the rest to God.

A child's trustfulness come of age.

Walking in the dark as if it were day.

## KNOW THIS

*October 26*

You that have an infirmity, know this, that it is no better for being borne with an ill-will, and much better for being bravely and cheerfully borne.

It is easy to say this, but remember that though you would be happier without this weakness, yet it may be strength to others who see you making a blessing of it.

## BEAR THIS IN MIND

*October 27*

It has long been handed down that ill news travels apace. The whole truth is not in this familiar saying, but some truth is in it. It reminds us that the worst is often more easily found than the best.

Is not this another way of saying that the best is not so easily seen as the worst? This does not mean that there is less good than bad, only that it takes more finding. There is more fresh air than rubbish, but the rubbish is easier to see.

If some one a hundred miles from you commits murder, the story will be on every one's lips in an hour or two. If a woman in your street denies herself in order to send five shillings in response to a B.B.C. appeal, how long will it be before you hear of it?

Remember that goodness is everywhere, but we must look diligently for it.

## WORK AND PRAYER

*October 28*

JOHN ELLERTON's hymn for busy people deserves to be more widely known:

Around us rolls the ceaseless tide  
Of business, toil, and care,  
And scarcely can we turn aside  
For one brief hour of prayer.

Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,  
The wealth of land and sea,  
The worlds of science and of art,  
Revealed and ruled by Thee.

Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought  
As Thou wouldst have it done;  
And prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,  
Itself with work be one.

## ASKING TOO LITTLE

*October 29*

I WONDER how many of us realize that there is a danger of asking too little of life?

When we pause to think how magnificently we were meant to live, what wealth of knowledge and experience can be ours, how much there is to do and to learn, how many parts of living there are to explore, we must see that to be content with mediocre lives, to be satisfied with a crust when a banquet is ours for the asking, is foolishness.

## TWO RICH MEN

*October 30*

THERE is a story of a man whom others called poor and who had just enough fortune to support himself in going about the country in the simplest way, studying and enjoying the life and the beauty of it. He was once in the company of a millionaire who was engaged in business, working at it daily and getting richer every year, and the poor man said to the millionaire, 'I am a richer man than you are.'

'How do you make that out?' said the millionaire.

'Why,' he replied, 'I have as much money as I want, and you have not.'

## REMEMBER THESE

*October 31*

THERE is some good in this bad old world:

I know a man who repaid a debt after thirty years—and paid it to the son of the man he borrowed it from.

I have seen a parson selling newspapers at a street-corner so that a newsboy should not lose his custom while in hospital.

I have met a business-man who told me there were a few things he could not do, rather shady things, but legitimate in a way, because he felt that it would have grieved his mother had she known.

I have talked with a man who turned down an offer of £1,000 a year for the sake of his invalid mother—and kept his secret from her, too.

## THE CITY SET ON A HILL

*November 1*

HERE is a twentieth-century dreamer. Harold Begbie, talking of the proud citizen:

The proud citizen is the man for whom this nation is always young and existence always good; who stands free from the despotism of customs and believes with all his soul in progress and improvement; who would have his city to be like a beacon set on a hill; who desires music in its streets and song in its houses; who seeks in the happiness of all the fulfilment of his own passion for perfection; and who would bring both art and commerce, both religion and science into the active and unselfish service of his fellow-citizens.

## MORE OF THIS, PLEASE

*November 2*

Two delivery vans at one side of the street, a constant stream of traffic at the other. Among it all a Rolls-Royce, and in front an old man with a handcart piled high with empty boxes. A crash, and the boxes were lying in the street.

Then the door of the Rolls-Royce opened, and a smiling man in a large coat got out, helped to pick up the boxes, packed them on the handcart, and when the work was finished said, 'Well, all O.K. now?' Then he got into the car, and the chauffeur drove on.

Do you ever see things like this?

## A PRECIOUS THING

November 3

A FINE petition is this:

I ask thee for a thoughtful love,  
Through constant watching wise,  
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,  
And wipe the weeping eyes;  
*And a heart at leisure from itself  
To soothe and sympathize.*

## ARE THEY NOT RIGHT?

November 4

LISTEN to words of good cheer:

THOMAS À KEMPIS (*writing in Holland a few years before America was found*): If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (*in America*): Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow.

SENECA (*who was a young man in Rome when Jesus was crucified*): No evil is without its compensation.

*A Chinese proverb known five thousand years ago*: You cannot prevent the birds of sadness flying over your head, but you can prevent them building nests in your hair.

*A homeless man*: 'Mid pleasures and palaces, there's no place like home.

## GUNPOWDER TREASON AND PLOT

*November 5*

THERE was a man once who wanted to make the world a better place, so he gathered a few friends together, and with their help plotted to blow the English Parliament sky-high. It was to be a quick change, and Guy Fawkes was doomed to failure whether he lighted his powder or not.

Another man who wanted to make the world a better place, gathered a few friends together and with their help plotted against all evil, and gave himself as a sacrifice, and committed the fulfilment of his great campaign to a few simple men of Galilee. The campaign still goes on.

Courage, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. Not swiftly the work goes on, but surely.

## CARLYLE CHEERFUL

*November 6*

HERE in dull November let us think of stern Carlyle chattering about cheerfulness:

‘Wondrous’ (says he) ‘is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculating its powers of endurance. Efforts, to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous—a spirit all of sunshine, graceful from very gladness, beautiful because bright.’

It is all true. A merry heart goes all the way—a sad one tires in a mile.

## BE QUICK

*November 7*

Be quick to lend a hand.

Be quick to give a word of praise, and to say, 'Thank you', especially to those with whom you spend most of your time.

Be quick to give sympathy and cheer.

Be quick to apologize.

Be quick to admit you are mistaken.

If there is anything needing to be done, be quick about starting it.

Be quick to learn.

Be quick to forgive.

Be quick to forget injuries.

Be quick to hear the voice of conscience, and to 'tune in' to the wireless of God.

## BE SLOW

*November 8*

Be slow to condemn or censure.

Be slow to anger.

Be slow to deride or criticize.

Be slow at paying people out.

Be slow to give advice.

Be slow to rush in where angels fear to tread.

Be slow in passing judgment, and slow to give up any task to which you are committed.

Be slow to defend yourself, for often due meditation will show that the attack made is not what you thought it was at first.

Be slow to doubt when God seems slow.

## BAD TIMES

*November 9*

THE best of bad times is that they can bring the best out of us. Our difficulties can sink or save us. They can be a dark way to destruction, or a steep stair to success and happiness. It depends on us.

Who will see this message and take it to himself? If you are about to give way, if you have held on and feel you can hold on no longer, *try again*. Do not let disaster crush you. Keep on, nobly, and you shall tread the worst under feet and all that is best in you shall sing.

## WHEN YOU CANNOT KEEP ON

*November 10*

You who have burdens so heavy that you feel you cannot carry them farther, a word of comfort for you. Let me tell you I am one with you. Time again I have felt that I could not keep on. I have felt that the old way must be broken. Not only have I felt it. I feel it now.

But I keep on. It is hard for you, and for me. Some of you feel you cannot face another day of tedious routine, or live with a cantankerous husband, or nurse an invalid, or bear a pain, or keep a secret. But you do. You keep on, feeling you cannot.

Be comforted, and remember I, too, am trying day by day to make the impossible possible.

## SHALL WE KEEP THE TRUST?

*November 11*

LORD, drop Thy peace into our hearts this day. Let us not forget that we inherit a peace bought at inestimable cost. Give us grace and wisdom so to live that we break not faith with those who died.

With a cheer they died, and with a vision of a new world. Teach us how to make peace a glorious thing. Set our hearts on fire with inextinguishable zeal for making peace a splendid and an inspiring thing, a fine adventure in which even children may learn to be courageous, youth may storm the gates of ignorance, age bring home the spoils of magnificent years, and all men discover anew the supreme triumph of living as brothers in a world that is gallant-hearted.

## THINK OF THE GOOD

*November 12*

SOME ONE has said: It is just as easy to think goodness of one's fellows as evil. A man who avoids speaking evil of others is seldom assailed by others. There is good in all of us.

The way to encourage good behaviour is to practise it and laud it. The habit of thinking goodness of others increases the goodness of the thinker, and that is always a thing devoutly to be wished.

## MAKE SURE

*November 13*

HAVE you eyes to see the beauty of the world? Have you ears to hear the good? Is there a home for you to come to at the end of the day? Do you own a few square yards of ground? Have you one friend? Is there no one who ever does you a kind action or speaks a good word? Is it not true that you can walk, and that Jones cannot? Or, if you are in bed, is it not true that you can see the sky from your window? Do you never have a warm handgrip, or a pleasant surprise?

Things are bad perhaps, and possibly you deserve more sympathy. But are you forgetting anything? Do make sure before you grumble.

## DO YOUR BEST

*November 14*

If you are discontented because you do things and no one ever praises you, or thanks you, or seems to appreciate what you do, remember that no man ever did his best and lost by doing it. God is no man's debtor. Keep on doing this thing as if every one were acclaiming you. You are doing yourself good service, for to do what you have to do a little less perfectly than you might is to rob yourself of satisfaction in the thing done; to have a sneaking disregard for yourself, to know yourself for a 99 per cent man when you ought to be 100.

Do the thing magnificently for its own sake.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

*November 15*

WHAT is there you can do well?

Often those succeed most who know what they cannot do. This saves them from wasting time and squandering energy, and gives them opportunity for the things they really can do.

Have you found your bent? Are you a good cook? Are you clever at mending toys, or telling jokes, or singing, or writing letters, or nursing the sick, or preaching, or entertaining, or advising old folk, or gardening. What is it?

Find out, and when you have found out, do it with your heart and soul.

## BUYING AND SELLING

*November 16*

HERE is one of old Thomas Dekker's prayers:

Let me not be one of those buyers and sellers whom Thy Son, Jesus, thrust out of the Temple; but rather one of those merchants that sell all and follow Thee. And since to love our neighbour is fulfilling of the law, give me grace that I may be counted no breaker of the law, but a keeper of it sound. Let not mine eye look upon false weights, nor my hand be held out to take an uneven balance. He loseth a peece of his soul every time that robbeth his chapman of his measure; and he that unjustly gaineth by thirty pence, selleth, like Judas, even his master, Christ.

## HE CAME

*November 17*

He came to seek that which was lost.

'They that are whole,' said he, 'need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'

This he said of Himself while he was yet alive, and since His victory He has fulfilled His promise in multitudes of hearts and lives.

## THE LOST

*November 18*

If things have come to this pass with you, by your own fault or through another's, you are a complete failure.

But listen, what is impossible with men is possible with God. If you, having lived a detestable life, come now in penitence to a facing-up of the failure of yours, I tell you that I do not see how you are going to be made anew, cleansed, reclothed, put in your right mind, reinstated, reconsecrated, redeemed. But I know it can be done. Give God a chance.

Is not this half the message of the Gospel? Jesus came to seek the lost. He came to put his hand into the failure's hand, and to walk with him, so that he could walk alone. He hated sin. He loved sinners. He hates what you have done. He knows what you can become.

## ST. PAUL'S SUMMARY

*November 19*

LET this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.

## ABIDE WITH ME

*November 20*

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE died this day in 1874. Here is his triumph song:

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide!  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, Lord, abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,  
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,  
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;  
Come, friend of sinners, and abide with me!

Reveal Thyself before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the  
skies;

Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain  
shadows flee;

In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!

## QUARRIES OF COMFORT

*November 21*

IF you would find helpful, cheering things, if you would be guided and strengthened, you shall find these things in good books. Here are a few of which no man should be entirely ignorant.

The Bible, Bacon's Essays, Barrie's Quality Street, The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, Holy Living and Dying, R. L. Stevenson's *Virginibus Puerisque*, David Grayson's *Adventures in Contentment*, The Imitation of Christ, The Pilgrim's Progress, Arthur Mee's *Everlasting Things*, Olive Schreiner's *Dreams*, *In Tune with the Infinite* by Trine, *Idylls of the King* by Tennyson, Leslie Weatherhead's *Transforming Friendship*, *The Story of the Other Wise Man* by Henry Van Dyke, Hazlitt's Essays, Pargrave's *Golden Treasury*, *Alice In Wonderland* (for the end of a tiring day), *The Prayer Book*, Studdert Kennedy's Rhymes, *God in the Slums*, Keble's *Christian Year*.

## THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT

*November 22*

DEATH is the last hurdle before the winning-post. Are you afraid? Do you remember that reply Socrates made to his friends just before he drank the cup of hemlock?

'Where shall we bury you?' they asked.

'Anywhere you like,' said he, '*if you can catch me.*'

## HAVE YOU FOUND IT SO?

*November 23*

HALF the troubles of life never come.

Half the troubles that do come are not half as bad as we expected they would be.

Half of those which are bad might have been worse.

Half the remainder are soon forgotten.

Half the few that are left smart, but somehow they bring compensations in wonderful ways.

Half the residue are serious afflictions but they leave us the stronger for being tried.

'This is what I have found. Have you found it so?

## A PRAYER FOR THE FORTUNATE

*November 24*

LORD, be with all fortunate people.

Bless all who have riches that they may know how to consecrate them to useful and beautiful service. Bless all who are happy that they may never forget Thee. Bless healthy people, and help them to understand what suffering is.

Lord, bless all who are prospering in business, and let humanity have a page in their ledgers. Bless all who go to parties and dances, and have hosts of friends. May they find a friend in Thee. Be very near those who think they have no need of Thee. May they sometimes sense Thy presence. Be with them all, Lord, for sunshine sometimes dazzles.

## DUTY

*November 25*

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK says, 'We ought not to picture Duty as a stern taskmistress. She is rather a kind and sympathetic mother, ever ready to shelter us from the cares and anxieties of the world, and to guide us in the paths of peace.'

DRYDEN says, 'Maintain your post, that's all the fame you need.'

FROUDE says, 'In common things the law of sacrifice takes the form of positive duty.'

## DOING AND SAYING

*November 26*

ONCE upon a time a company of men and women were walking by a river when one of their number fell in.

'I told you that would happen if you didn't look where you were going,' said one.

'I'm very sorry for you,' said another.

'This is a most unfortunate affair, but thank goodness *I'm* not to blame!' a third remarked complacently.

'You should have taken my advice and learnt how to swim,' a fourth observed.

'Keep your head above water,' a fifth directed.

But the man sank, and he would assuredly have been drowned had not a stranger plunged into the water and dragged him to safety.

And all this was observed by the Recording Angel, who wrote down the name of one man only in the Book of Life.

## GOD FULFILS HIMSELF

*November 27*

AND slowly answered Arthur from the barge:

‘The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. *More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of.* Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a mountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands or prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.’

## A SURE REFUGE

*November 28*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

‘The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Be still, and know that I am God.’

## THE KIT-BAG

*November 29*

HERE are a few odds and ends which might with advantage be included in your kit-bag for the journey of life:

An ounce or two of patience; a handful of courage; a song-book; a dash of humour; a few smiles for the miles; a mirror (almost essential); a couple of sandwiches to spare for another traveller you may chance to overtake; half a dozen worth-while topics of conversation; a note-book for good things found on the way; a lamp for dark nights; the oil of joy; a pinch of salt; a tablet of soap (cleanliness is next to Godliness); and a map of the road from Bethlehem to Calvary.

## AS YOU TRAVEL

*November 30*

As you travel there are a few points to bear in mind. Thus:

Take care at the outset that you are going in the right direction. (Christian looked up and Evangelist showed him a shining light.) From time to time call a halt to make sure you have your compass-bearing correctly. Be not side-tracked. Be not over anxious to reach the end of the journey alone. Sing at night, smile by day. Consider that your burden may be cast aside. Look back over the way and be thankful. Look forward, and fear not. Lay aside every weight, run with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

## GRUMBLERS

*December 1*

MANY people grumble, not because there is anything to grumble at, but because they have a habit of grumbling.

If there is nothing to grumble at, don't grumble. If there is, you should not have time.

Grumblers are short-lived (thank heaven).

Those who grumble most are the people other people have some excuse for grumbling at.

If you are perfect, grumble to your heart's content.

Little mischances are sure to come your way. Grumbling will not prevent them, cannot improve them, and achieves no other end than making the bad worse.

Never grumble at what you could have prevented, and do not waste your breath over those things you could not have prevented.

## SHE KNEW

*December 2*

I LOVE that story of a lady who at a grand dinner in New York was sitting next to a professor of science. 'Yes,' she said in reply to a query, 'the Bible says so.'

'The Bible?' asked the professor. 'The Bible? Surely you don't believe the Bible?'

'Oh, yes,' was the quiet answer. 'I believe it. You see' (and here she smiled), '*I know the author.*' Think about it.

## CONSECRATION

*December 3*

FROM RUFUS JONES:

The shoemaker who makes an honest shoe and feels the sacredness of his work, is in his humble way consecrated. The scientist who counts nothing too hard in his unwearied struggle to win one more secret from the unknown, is among those who are consecrated.

The daughter who smothers all her own personal dreams to care for an invalid mother or a widowed father, the reformer who spends his days studying the slums, the Christian teacher who counts no obstacle too difficult if he may make one more person enter into the real meaning of the love of Christ—all these are examples of consecration.

## FINDING OUR WAY THROUGH

*December 4*

FROM JOHN BEVAN:

Our equipment for living the highest, and the best life is not in the realm of gifts, but always in the sphere of spirit. Not talents, but a certain quality of motive. Not possessions, but purposes of a truly beautiful kind. What gets us best through the fog is not force, but simply trying to live true to certain standards of moral and spiritual rules bunched into an inner impulse.

This inner impulse gives a certain quality to all our experience, and it is this quality of living which helps us to find our way through.

## THE UNFASHIONABLE WORD

*December 5*

THERE is a word which has gone out of fashion, an ugly word standing for everything which separates men and women and destroys the sanctities of life.

It is the word *sin*. It is never used in polite society, but the word alone is dying, not the thing it stands for.

Our grandfathers recognized it, feared it, prayed to be saved from it, and knew that their own strength was insufficient for them to escape it. We are no better men. The way to happiness leads away from this ugly thing. The cleverest of us, the most experienced, the oldest, most saintly, all need a horror of the thing this unfashionable word stands for—a falling short of the best we might be.

## CHEERFUL PEOPLE

*December 6*

I THINK the most cheerful person I have ever known was an old lady who had been bed-ridden for over twenty years, a prisoner in a small room, and a confirmed optimist.

When I feel I am becoming morbid or self-pitying, I think of this brave woman, and it is enough to shame me into a better mood.

After all, few of us are so unfortunate that we have a good excuse for making other people wretched. Only when ours is the heaviest of all burdens may we enjoy being miserable. Till then, let us put a cheerful courage on.

## TO-DAY

December 7

LET me to-day do something that will take  
A little sadness from the world's vast store,  
And may I be so favoured as to make  
Of joy's too scanty sum a little more.  
Let me not hurt by any selfish deed,  
Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or  
friend,  
Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,  
Or sin by silence where I should defend.  
Let me to-night look back across the span  
'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience  
say:  
Because of some good act to beast or man  
*The world is better that I lived to-day.*

## WORK AND WORSHIP

December 8

THERE are few of us who never feel a little enmity  
owards our daily work. When we are in this mood  
et us recall Campbell Macfie's words:  
Work is devout, and service is divine.  
Who stoops to scrub a floor  
May worship more  
Than he who kneels before a holy shrine.  
Or Owen Meredith's:  
God be thanked that the dead have left still  
Good undone for the living to do;  
Still some aim for the heart and the will  
And the soul of a man to pursue.

## PILGRIMAGE

*December 9*

O God of Bethel by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed;  
Who through this weary pilgrimage  
Has all our fathers led.

Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
Before Thy throne of grace;  
God of our fathers, be the God  
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life  
Our wandering footsteps guide;  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
And raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy covering wings around,  
Till all our wanderings cease,  
And at our Father's loved abode  
Our souls arrive in peace!

## A HALFPENNY

*December 10*

HERE is a quaint old word:

'I see in this world two heaps, one of human happiness, one of misery. If I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add it to the other, I carry a point. If a child has lost a halfpenny and I give it another, so wiping away its tears, I have done something. I should be glad to do greater things, but I will not neglect this.'

## THE PILE COMPLETE

*December 11*

TAKE the long view—as Tennyson did:

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood—  
That nothing walks with aimless feet,  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void  
When God hath made the pile complete!

## THE CHAINED LIONS

*December 12*

LIFE is like this:

So I saw in my dream that Christian made haste and went forward that if possible he might get lodging there. Now before he had gone far, he entered into a very narrow passage, which was about a furlong off the Porter's Lodge; and looking very narrowly before him as he went, he espied two lions in the way. Then he was afraid and thought to go back, for he thought that nothing but death was before him. But the Porter at the lodge said, 'Fear not.'

Then I saw he went on trembling for fear of the lions; but taking good heed to the directions of the Porter. He heard them roar, but they did him no harm. Then he clapped his hands and went on till he came and stood before the gate where the Porter was.

## GOD'S BLUE PENCIL

*December 13*

LITTLE MISS FIVE said she knew her teacher loved her because she always put kisses against the sums she worked in school!

It seems to me that as we grow older we should learn by experience that God deals with us in this way, and that His corrections are proof of His love.

We ought to remember that our apparent failures and our mistakes may teach us the art of living; and we should never forget that God uses the blue pencil only because He is anxious to help us to do better.

His crosses are indeed the tokens of His love.

## WHEN TO DESPAIR

*December 14*

WHEN no springtime follows winter; when I have a day without one redeeming feature; when there is not one young man with a vision of a better world; when I meet a man who is wholly bad; when there are no children with open eyes; no old people grateful for the past; when life has lost all its adventure; when the greatest thing has been done, and the last word said, and the final discovery made, and perfection in all things reached; when the glory of the world is a common thing and the spirit of wonder dead, it will be time to despair.

## A KING TO HIS SON

*December 15*

HERE is part of Louis the Ninth's will made in 1270. To his son he says:

I recommend you to love God with all your heart. Be careful to do nothing to displease him. If God should visit you with adversity, bear it with patience and prayer. If he should send prosperity, thank him and be not puffed up with pride. Confess your sins, and at church service go without chattering. Be compassionate and gentle. Be careful how you make friends. Love all that is good, hate what is evil. Render thanks unto God. Be reasonable in your expenses.

Finally, I bestow on you every blessing which a father can give his son. May God keep you from evil, and give you grace to do his will, so that in the life to come we may unite to praise him. Amen.

## A SON TO HIS FATHER

*December 16*

AND he was withdrawn from them and kneeled down, and prayed, and being in an agony he prayed he more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, and when he arose from prayer a great multitude came and led him unto Pilate, and when they were come to Calvary they crucified him, and he prayed, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*

## SYMBOLS

*December 17*

CHRISTMAS is full of symbolism.

They say the mincemeat with its fruits and spices of the East is intended to remind us of the gifts of the Wise Men. The candles on the Christmas tree are little lights (so it is said) kindled at the Star which stood over the place where the Light of the World was born. The holly is to remind us that One who went about doing good wore a crown of thorns. The mistletoe is for kissing, the symbol of love. The presents are tokens of homage, the singing is an echo of the song the angels sang, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, goodwill.*

## LUTHER'S CHRISTMAS HYMN

*December 18*

Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes,  
Who is it in yon manger lies?  
Who is this child so young and fair?  
The blessed Christ Child lieth there.

Were earth a thousand times as fair,  
Beset with gold and jewels rare,  
She yet were far too poor to be  
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child,  
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
Within my heart that it may be  
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

## A LOVELY THING TO DO

*December 19*

LET me share with you one of the best ways of making happiness at this season.

The secret is in a copper pocket.

Perhaps you have never heard of a copper pocket? I will explain. Now that Christmas is almost here you go to the bank and change five or ten shillings into pennies. (You can do it with five pounds, if you wish.) Then you put as much of the copper as you can conveniently carry into your right hand pocket (let not your left hand know), and *wander* down the busy streets of the town and into a crowded store, and look out for poor children (those with eyes on toys they can never have in their stockings); and as you pass you slip a few pennies into their astonished hands. God blesses you as you do it. It is a lovely thing to do. With ten shillings you can make half a hundred happy hearts. A single present of £50 will not make you as happy as the emptying of a copper pocket secretly, mysteriously, reverently.

## A YOUNG MAN

*December 20*

GEORGE RUSSELL says: A young man who had been troubling society with what he called the Kingdom of Heaven, had been put away, and I can imagine an unbeliever saying, 'It will all blow over, now.' Yes, the wind from the Kingdom of Heaven has blown over the world, and shall blow for centuries yet.

## THE SECRET

*December 21*

A CHARMING little maid of six walked into the big shop with a mysterious air. Her tiny finger drew the important assistant, who obediently followed her out of the shop to the pavement. 'Please that's the one!' she said pointing to a table-runner at 5s. 11d. 'Mummie wants that, and I've promised to buy it, and it's a secret, and will you please send it on Christmas Eve?'

The obsequious assistant hesitated. The little maid gave her address, produced her purse, offered one shilling, and waited for some change. Then the manager appeared. 'You will be sure to send it, won't you?' said the little one.

'It shall come without delay, madam,' said the big man.

(A little child shall lead them.)

## SEVEN TREASURES

*December 22*

HERE are seven good things:

There is not enough darkness in the world to extinguish the light of one small candle.

'No bid' never won a rubber.

DAVID GRAYSON: When I find fault I always begin with myself, then I never get any farther.

If you want to put the world right start with yourself.

He that is full of himself is empty.

LINCOLN: Whatever you are, be a good one.

The kingdom of heaven is within you.

## CONSPIRATORS

*December 23*

THE hour was late. Stealthily we came up the path. Cautiously my friend opened the door. On tiptoe we went into the hall, in whispers only we spoke as softly up the stairs we went.

I assure you it would have been easier to take a safe out of a house than it was to get that rocking-horse in without a little fellow knowing anything about it.

Half the glory of Christmas is its secrecy. It is the time when honest fathers tell lies; when uncles (who normally are respectable bank-managers) are to be seen dodging into toyshops and coming out guiltily with something on their conscience.

Oh, blessed spirit of Christmas, make us all artful dodgers in doing good!

## HEAR THE ANGELS SING

*December 24*

LET us begin Christmas with a silent fellowship by the fireside—a silent communion each with each, and all with God.

It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold;  
'Peace on the earth, good-will to men,  
From heaven's all-gracious King!'  
*The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.*

## UNTO US A CHILD IS GIVEN

*December 25*

THE happiest day in all the year!

The happiest day because it is the day when most of us think least about ourselves.

Lord, put the spirit of Christmas in our hearts. Give us the faith of a child; a selfless love; laughter and song; that all the year round we may share another's joys and sorrows. May a child lead us into Thy very presence that we may praise Thee by lives of gentle and beautiful service, unfretted by faithlessness, but vigorous with perfect truth.

## TO-DAY'S CHILD

*December 26*

The wise may bring their learning,  
The rich may bring their wealth;  
And some may bring their greatness,  
And some bring strength and health.  
We, too, would bring our treasures  
To offer to the King;  
We have no wealth or learning;  
What shall we children bring?  
We'll bring Him hearts that love Him,  
We'll bring Him thankful praise,  
And young souls meekly striving  
To walk in holy ways;  
And these shall be the treasures  
We offer to the King;  
And these are gifts that even  
The poorest child may bring.

## RIGHT OR WRONG

*December 27*

HERE is a little word. Think about it. Try to act in the spirit of it. It is:

If I am right, Thy grace impart,  
Still in the right to stay;  
If I am wrong O teach my heart  
To find that better way!

## LET US HELP

*December 28*

TENNYSON sings of ringing out the bad and ringing in the good. Let us help.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring happy bells across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## ALL THE TRUMPETS SOUNDED

December 29

IF we have tried to live finely and have come bravely along the road, and loved our fellows, and found time to serve, we shall be ready at the end, and perhaps singing. It shall be for us as Bunyan tells us it was for Mr. Valiant-for-Truth of whom we read:

After this it was noised that Mr. Valiant-for-Truth was sent for. When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. When the day was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which as he went he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' and as he went down deeper he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' *So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*

## THREE WORDS

December 30

IF I were asked to give the world three words, I would reply: Courage, Faith, Love.

And my interpretation would be: Pray for courage to stand bravely and cheerfully if life is hard. Have faith in what God can do through you, and in the essential goodness of men. Keep a warm love in your heart that life may never grow cold, that you may never be utterly alone, and that the divine flame may never go out.

## THE MILES AHEAD

*December 31*

FRIEND, thus far have we come together.

Who knows what the next mile of the journey will be? Will it be up or down, in sunshine or in rough weather, along an easy, friendly road, or by some lonely way where we must blaze a trail with none to cheer us on?

If easy, then lighten another's burden if you can. Let your song cheer a fellow-traveller. If need be, give him your strong hand. Preach little to him, but talk pleasantly of whatsoever things are good. So may your own journeying be lighter, and may you come to the end, not alone, but in company with friends.

And if the way be hard, be strong and faint not. Be of good cheer. Carry with you that sure promise of One who said, 'Lo, I am with thee, even unto the end.' Your burden may be heavy, but your back will be strong enough to bear it.

Go forth with unfaltering step, with an unshakable faith, for to brave souls no evil can befall, and for those who walk humbly there comes day by day a serenity and peace which the world can never take away.

Go, therefore, with confidence. Enter the new year with cheerfulness. And the grace of Our Lord, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit go with you, that day by day you may have the greatest of all possessions, the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

